

THE POWER OF SOBRIETY

by

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THESIS ABSTRACT

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This thesis examines the power of the sober costume, or black, minimally ornamented dress, in portraits of Elizabethan female subjects. Current scholarship on the portraiture of Elizabethan women pays more attention to extravagant costumes. The history of material culture has emphasized the importance of ornament and color in the costumes of Elizabethan era elites; these qualities denoted status. Nevertheless, women of different and distinct classes were often depicted in sober garments, signifying the pervasiveness of the costume. This fact is evident in the portraits of three different women from three different classes: Bess of Hardwick from the courtly nobility, Joyce Frankland from the urban elite, and the royal Queen Elizabeth I. This thesis introduces the sober costume for Elizabethan women and argues that while its connotation is complex and multifaceted, sober costume transcended social boundaries to represent power and autonomy.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Sober black costume in Elizabethan England was a sartorial visual code that communicated complicated and multilayered messages. Both men and women, monarch and merchant were portrayed in varying sorts of sober costume in Elizabethan portraits. This costume, broadly defined as a predominately black garment with little to no ornamentation, had several significant and sometimes contradictory connotations.¹ Sober dress could signify sober judgment, moral integrity, humility, grief, masculinity, and in some cases, status. This thesis will investigate the use of the sober style by Elizabethan women, examining how the costume signified power. While scholarship has used the terms “sober” or “severe” to describe varying garments in portraits, the significance has not been fully explored, especially in relation to women’s costumes.²

Sixteenth century treatises emphasized the significance of the sober costume. The authors complained about how extravagant and presumptuous dress had become, especially for women, advocating for a more sober fashion. The Catholic priest, William Harrison, in his 1577 manuscript, *Description of Elizabethan England*, wrote:

In women also, it is most to be lamented, that they do now far exceed the lightness of our men (who nevertheless are transformed from the cap even to the very shoe), and such staring attire as in time past was supposed meet for none but light housewives only is now become a habit for chaste and sober matrons. What

¹ The color black and minimalism in ornamentation are integrally tied together and coincide in many of the portraits in the corpus. The costumes that feature minimal ornamentation are all predominately black in material. Ornamentation/decoration includes embroidery or color as well as added gems and jewels.

² See for example, Doris Adler’s description of the Siena Sieve portrait of Queen Elizabeth I in “The Riddle of the Sieve: The Siena Sieve Portrait of Queen Elizabeth,” *Renaissance Papers 1978*, eds. A. Leigh Denef and M. Thomas Hester (Durham, NC: The Southeastern Renaissance Conference, 1979), 7 or Christopher Breward, *The Culture of Fashion* (New York: Manchester University Press, 1995), 46. It should also be considered how the privileging of color and ornamentation might itself shape the portraits reproduced in catalogues and thus available for the corpus.

should I say of their doublets with pendant codpieces on the breast full of jags and cuts, and sleeves of sundry colours? Their galligascons to bear out their bums and make their attire to fit plum round (as they term it) about them. Their fardingals, and diversely coloured nether stocks of silk, jerdsey, and such like, whereby their bodies are rather deformed than commended? I have met with some of these trulls in London so disguised that it hath passed my skill to discern whether they were men or women.³

Although Harrison did not write that men should wear exclusively black, he did emphasize a more muted dress rather than one with “garish colors” and decorative cuts in the fabric for ornamentation.⁴ According to Harrison this type of extravagant dress was less English and more foreign.⁵ Harrison commended the merchants who wore clothes that were, “very fine and costly, yet in form and color [they] representeth a great piece of the ancient gravity.”⁶ Another author, Philip Stubbes, in his 1583 *Anatomie of Abuses*, grieved over the extravagance of Elizabethan fashion:

I would with that a decencie, a comly order, and ... a *decorum* were observed, as well in Attire as in all things els: but would God the contrarie were not true; for most of our novell Inventions and new fangled fashions rather deforme us then adorne us, disguise us then become us, making us rather to resemble savadge Beastes and sterne Monsters, then continent, sober, and chaste Christians.⁷

The elite believed that extravagant dress worn by those of lesser statuses would cause disorder in the social organization of English society. Dress in the sixteenth century was a

³ William Harrison, *Elizabethan England*, ed. Ernest Ehys (Project Gutenberg, 2010), 110. Parts of Harrison are also quoted in Janet Arnold, *Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe Unlock'd: The Inventories of the Wardrobe of Robes Prepared in July 1600 edited from Stowe MS 557 in the British Library, MS LR 2/121 in the Public Record Office, London, and MS V.b.72 in the Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington DC* (Leeds, England: Maney, 1988), 143.

⁴ Harrison, *Elizabethan England*, 111-112.

⁵ In particular, imported from France. *Ibid.*, 112.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Philip Stubbes, *Philip Stubbes's Anatomy of the Abuses in England in Shakespeare's Youth*, ed. Frederick J. Furnivall (London: N. Trübner, 1877-9), 30.

way to organize the population and propagate status.⁸ Sumptuary Laws, drafted and passed during Queen Elizabeth I's reign, emphasize the Elizabethan fear of the abuse of clothing. Laws at the time stipulated that only certain classes could wear appropriately established colors or cloths, emphasizing the power of the connotation of clothing.

Costume historians, focusing on extravagant clothing as a device of self-fashioning, have celebrated the Elizabethans as fully aware of the sartorial power of clothing.⁹ Christopher Breward explained that in the sixteenth century "choice of garments, colors and applied decoration was governed to a great degree by an understanding of, and engagement with, both hidden and blatant visual codes that communicated carefully considered and highly measured messages of gentility to the initiated."¹⁰ The evidence provided by portraiture suggests that many Elizabethans wore extravagantly decorated and colorful clothes.¹¹ The choice, by the patrons of the portraits, to be represented in such costumes is a reflection of Elizabethan attitudes on social

⁸ Sue Vincent, "To Fashion a Self: Dressing in Seventeenth-Century England," *Fashion Theory* 3, no. 2 (1999), 205.

⁹ For example, see Sue Vincent, *Dressing the Elite: Clothes in Early Modern England* (New York: Berg, 2003).

¹⁰ Breward, *The Culture of Fashion*, 63.

¹¹ There is some disagreement between art historians and costume historians about whether or not the clothes in portraits were actually worn by the sitter. See for example Joanna Woodall's introduction in *Portraiture: Facing the Subject*, ed. Joanna Woodall (New York: Manchester University Press, 1997), 1-28. However, what is more important to consider is that the patrons of the portraits *chose to be represented* in the costume, regardless if they were real or not. According to Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass, Renaissance portraits were meant to be among other things material representations of costumes. The costume was integral to self-fashioning; the painting of the portrait was a relatively minor expense in comparison to the new costume purchased for the occasion. See Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory*, Cambridge Studies in Renaissance Literature Culture (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 34. However, as Anna Reynolds explained, the costumes depicted were most likely not the everyday clothes of the aristocracy. Reynolds did not suggest that the costumes were imaginary, but that the costumes depicted were idealized clothes. Pristine costumes that showed no wear suggested that the sitter was wealthy enough to have the necessary means to upkeep his clothing, i.e. he had many servants and multiple changes of clothing. See Anna Reynolds, *In Fine Style: The Art of Tudor and Stuart Fashion* (London: Royal Collection Trust, 2013), 26.

hierarchy. This is echoed by the general argument of Elizabethan costume history: the richer, more colorful, and more ornamented the costume, the higher the status of the sitter. However, while the majority of costumes in Elizabethan portraits are highly decorated and colorful, there are still a significant amount of portraits that portray the sitter in a sober costume. In a corpus assembled for this project (a corpus that deliberately excluded portraits of Queen Elizabeth I), thirty out of one-hundred-and-seventeen Elizabethan portraits of women feature the sitter in clothing of a sober style.¹² These rather plain, black costumes make up more than one-fourth of the corpus and although women of all statuses are portrayed in the costume, costume historians rarely discuss this style.

Black was an important color and symbol in the sixteenth century. John Ferne's *Blazon of Gentry*, published in England in 1586, was an instruction book for "Gentlemen bearers of Armes."¹³ In the book, Ferne discussed heraldry and the significance of colors. Black was one of the most important colors as all the other colors were derived from either black or white.¹⁴ In detail, Ferne defined the significance of black:

The colour of blacke representeth the Diamond, the most precious amongst the rest of the gemmes, and in the Planets it representeth Saurne, the father of the other. The colour of blacke is likewise the most auncient of all other colours, for in the beginning there was darkenes over the face of the earth. And although that

¹² This corpus was compiled by the author from reproductions of portraits found in Roy Strong, *The English Icon: Elizabethan & Jacobean Portraiture* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1969), Jane Ashelford, *The Art of Dress: Clothes through History, 1500-1914* (New York: Abrams, 1996), Jane Ashelford, *Dress in the Age of Elizabeth I* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1988), Arnold, *Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe Unlock'd*, and Tarnya Cooper, *Citizen Portrait: Portrait Painting and the Urban Elite of Tudor and Jacobean England and Wales* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012).

¹³ John Ferne, *The Blazon of Gentry: Devided into two parts. The first names The Glorie of Generositie. The second, Lacyes Nobilitie. Comprehending discourses of Armes and Gentry...* (London: John Windet for Andrew Maunsell, 1586), title page.

¹⁴ Ferne, *The Glorie of Generositie* from *The Blazon of Gentry*, 144.

the colour of white (as *Aristotle* saith) was alwaies most praise-worthy for the brightnes of the same, being an object that worketh a better operation of the senses: yet can we not omit the honors due to the colour of black: as first, it is the most perdurable of all other colours, for it can hardle be altered into any other show or colour then the same, which of nature it is, whereas of the contrary part, it doth easily extinguish and blot out any other colour, whereby the constancy and fortitude of the bearer, is and may be secretly presignified: also for that this Eagle is depainted in this colour, even in that the coate-armor of this Saxon Earle is most honorable, for it denoteth the best of all other colours, the very colour of the Eagle, which resorteth most to blacke, being of a brown and duskish colour. Secondly, blacke representeth the nature of the Eagle, which is to live a great and long age, so doth the colour of blacke endure the longest of all the rest: for it is worth the marking, that in the depainting of any birds, beasts or fishes, it is a note of the chieftest honor.¹⁵

Furthermore, Italian color symbolism books were popular throughout Europe.¹⁶ One of the most widely read books was written by Sicile, Herald of Alphonso V, King of Aragon in the early sixteenth century. Its popularity is attested by the many translations published in the Elizabethan era, including an English translation in 1583.¹⁷ According to Sicile, black was a symbol for grief and constancy and this reading of black continued in other popular color symbolism books throughout the sixteenth century.¹⁸

In cloth, black held further connotations. During the Elizabethan era, black dyed cloth appeared quite frequently on the portrait subjects. Elizabeth I's own preference for black was partially responsible for its frequency in appearance. Courtiers could wear black as a compliment towards the queen.¹⁹ Moreover, Jane Schneider argued richly

¹⁵ Ferne, *Lacyes Nobilitie* from *The Blazon of Gentry*, 20.

¹⁶ According to Arnold there were no English books solely on the topic of color symbolism. Therefore, England relied on translations of foreign works. See Arnold, *Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe Unlock'd*, 90.

¹⁷ M. Channing Linthicum, *Costume in the Drama of Shakespeare and his Contemporaries* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1936), 17-18.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 17-27.

¹⁹ See Chapter IV on Queen Elizabeth I for a more in-depth analysis of her color preference.

colored cloth had to be imported from other European countries, thus Elizabethan subjects used added decoration to adorn their clothes instead of using foreign dyed material.²⁰ This meant that, in essence, both black cloth and decoration were more “English.”²¹

While embroidered cloth and jewel embellishments were expensive, the color of black itself could denote status. Black costume was a symbol of wealth and class among the urban elite.²² A series of watercolors done by Lucas de Heere, who lived in Britain from c.1566-1576, gives a rare glimpse at contemporary clothes of ordinary citizens. The *Drawing of Four Citizens' Wives* proves how ubiquitous black clothing was among the middling sort (fig. 1.1, see the Appendix for all figures). In the drawing, from left to right, De Heere labeled the four women as a citizen's wife (*burghers*), a wealthy citizen's wife (*burghers rijck*), her daughter and a countrywoman. The wealthy citizen's wife (featured in the center, looking out) is shown in a black gown, with a richly embroidered underskirt of a red color. The citizen's wife (on the left), according to Cooper, is shown in an expensive, but cheaper version of the wealthy citizen's wife's costume.²³ The wealthy citizen's wife, her daughter, and the citizen's wife are further ornamented with brooches, belts and necklaces. The countrywoman in stark comparison appears in an undyed costume. De Heere's watercolor is one of the few examples that document the everyday costumes of the Elizabethan “middle class.” Although black was less expensive

²⁰ Jane Schneider, “Fantastical Colors in Foggy London,” in *Material London, c.1600*, ed. Lena Cowen Orlin (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), 115-117.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 122.

²² Cooper, *Citizen Portrait*, 76-81.

²³ *Ibid.*, 76-77.

than colored clothing, it was still considered a symbol of the urban elites.²⁴ Black color not only required a tremendous amount of dye, but also required upkeep to keep the cloth black.²⁵

In a c.1590-95 miniature by Isaac Oliver, sober costume is used to represent the ideal woman (fig. 1.2). The allegorical scene features two main groups in the foreground. According to Hearn, the sober group represents “true love and felicity.”²⁶ The sobriety of this group is further highlighted by the contrastingly sumptuous costumes of the women positioned on the right. These women are shown in colorfully decorated garments and are representations of wantonness, “transient amusement and moral laxity.”²⁷ Their exposed breasts further emphasize their unrepressed sexual appetite. More importantly, Hearn argued that the groups of women represent different types of love: the sober group on the left denotes the married, while the group on the right represents the unmarried.²⁸ While the costumes of the sober group do have some added color and decoration, the juxtaposition of their costumes with the other “wanton” women clearly indicates the costumes’ intended soberness. In this scene, sobriety in dress is connected to marriage and morality.

²⁴ This term “urban elite” is used by Tarnya Cooper whose definition includes merchants, artisans, physicians, lawyers, clergymen, scholars, architects, etc., living in a city or urban area. Cooper, *Citizen Portrait*, 4.

²⁵ Cooper, *Citizen Portrait*, 78.

²⁶ Karen Hearn, ed, *Dynasties: Painting in Tudor and Jacobean England, 1530-1630* (New York: Rizzoli International Publications Inc., 1995), 131. Published in conjunction with the exhibition of the same name, shown at Tate Gallery, London.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 131.

²⁸ *Ibid.* Hearn argued that the women dressed in sober costume shown embracing a younger man may represented a mother kissing her son in a representation of “maternal love.”

Furthermore, along with sober costume as a sign of status and moral rightness, it also developed into an expression of masculine power. According to Baldassare Castiglione, black was the preferred color of the courtier. Although Castiglione's text was written from the point of view of the Italian courts, his treatise had a Europe-wide dissemination. The text was translated and published multiple times in England. The 1588 version indicates the text's currency at the English court:

Truth it is, that I would love it the better, if it were not extreme in any part, as the Frenchman is wont to be sometime over long, and the Dutchman over short, but as they are both the one and the other amended and brought into better frame by the Italians. Moreover I will holde alwaies with it, if it bee rather somewhat grave and auncient, than garith. Therefore me thinke a blacke colour hath a better grace in garments than any other, and though not thoroughly blacke, yet somewhat darke, and this I meane for his ordinarie apparrell. For there is not doubt, but upon armor it is more meete to have slightly and merrie colours, and also garments for pleasure, cut, pompous and rich. Likewise in open shewes about triumphes, games, maskeries, and such other matters, because so appointed there is in them a certain livelinesse and mirth, which in deede doth well set forth feates of armes and pastimes. But in the rest I coulde with they should declare the solemnitie that the Spanish nation much observeth, for outward matters many times are token of the inwarde.²⁹

Thus, for Castiglione, it was acceptable to wear more extravagant costume on certain special occasions, but for everyday dress, black costume was recommended for the courtier.

Scholarship on Elizabethan portraits and costumes, while rich and vast, rarely discusses the significance of the sober costume. Sir Roy Strong's invaluable art historical contribution on Elizabethan portraits provides a solid foundation on which to build.³⁰

²⁹ Baldassare Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, trans. Thomas Hoby (London, 1588), np. Hoby originally translated Castiglione's text in 1561, the book was then reprinted in 1577 and 1588.

³⁰ See Strong, *The English Icon*. As well as Strong's other publications, *The Cults of Elizabeth: Elizabeth Portraiture and Pageantry* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), *Artists of the Tudor Court: The Portrait Miniature Rediscovered 1520-1620* (London: Victoria & Albert Museum, 1983), and *Gloriana: The Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1987), among others.

Elizabethan costume historians, like Anna Reynolds, Jane Ashelford, and Sue Vincent, mainly focus on the colorful and highly decorated dress of the elite.³¹ Rather than discussing particular portraits in length, they offer an important but general survey of Elizabethan costumes of the elite. Christopher Breward and the joint research of Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass have further enriched the field of costume history.³² Breward's book, *The Culture of Fashion*, concerns the cultural and social significance of fashion. In it he argued that clothing is a "visual code" and meant to be decoded by others.³³ Furthermore, Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass argued that clothing was closely related to memory. In their book, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory*, they emphasized the currency of clothing and the importance of its record in portraits.³⁴

The discussion of black costume, however, is more limited. John Harvey's 1995 book, aptly titled *Men in Black*, follows the course of men's black dress from the 16th century to the 20th.³⁵ For men, black developed from a symbol of grief to a symbol of power free from the context of grief. According to Harvey, men's black dress is "the signature of what they have: of standing, goods, mastery."³⁶ The masculine power of black had first developed from penitential origins as a representation of loss and a sign of

³¹ See Reynolds, *In Fine Style*, Ashelford, *Dress in the Age of Elizabeth I*, and Vincent, *Dressing the Elite*.

³² See Breward, *The Culture of Fashion*, and Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory*.

³³ Breward, *The Culture of Fashion*, 63 and 65.

³⁴ See especially Jones and Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory*, 1-86.

³⁵ John Harvey, *Men in Black* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 10.

piety. Black was a humble color, “it was a way of escaping censure for possessing the highest of wordly baubles.”³⁷ However, “it is when the love drops out of grieving that mourning becomes more show than sorrow; then black clothes move from signifying grief to signifying the privileges claimed by grief.”³⁸ Black was worn by religious orders to represent their piety and therefore their justification in their militant actions. Thus their power was reinforced by the black costume.³⁹ Black was also the heraldic color of the Duchy of Burgundy, one of the most powerful states of fifteenth century Europe.⁴⁰ In the sixteenth century, the main influence in the wearing of black among powerful men was Emperor Charles V, a Catholic and of Burgundian decent. Charles V’s donning of the black costume influenced his own son, Philip II, who, in turn, went on to set trends in the Spanish court. Furthermore, the power of the sober costume is emphasized by the fact that Spanish fashion hardly changed in the sixteenth century.⁴¹

Grant McCracken’s article examined the use of black versus lighter colored clothing worn by Elizabeth’s courtiers.⁴² McCracken argued that Elizabeth’s male courtiers were divided by age and color.⁴³ The younger group, like Robert Devereux,

³⁷ Ibid., 93.

³⁸ Ibid., 51.

³⁹ Harvey, *Men in Black*, 49.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 54. According to Harvey, Philip first wore black in 1419 when his father was murdered by the French. He wore it thereafter as a reminder to the French that he would never forget their crime. However, in Philip’s case, “the prerogatives of grief become with time, and by a profession of piety, the assertion of a larger grave prerogative – as if, by his great grief, [he] has seized a moral height, and by shrewd instinct stayed there, enjoying a moral fortification of his ducal eminence.” Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid., 80.

⁴² Grant McCracken, “Dress Color at the Court of Elizabeth I: An Essay in Historical Anthropology,” *Canadian Review of Sociology* 22, no. 4 (1985), 515-533.

⁴³ Ibid., 517.

wore light colors, and the older group, like her close advisor, William Cecil, wore black. Thus, black male costume in the court of Elizabeth became associated with maturity and stability and was a sign of the older male courtier's constancy and devotion.⁴⁴ While both Harvey and McCracken emphasize black dress, they only talk about men's dress. According to Harvey, while men's black dress developed into a status of power, "women have tended, almost until the present century, to be left with the grieving and penitential use of black."⁴⁵

It is only recently that black costume for women has received some attention. Tarnya Cooper's 2013 book *Citizen Portrait* included a section on the importance of black dress for members of the urban elite.⁴⁶ Cooper's examination of the portraits also included analysis of the sitters' costumes, bridging the previous gap between portrait and costume history. Furthermore, Allison Levy's work on early modern widows examined the possibility of women's black sober costume as a powerful statement.⁴⁷ Levy recognized Castiglione's influential text and the prevalence of the powerful male black dress and connected these ideas with widow's black dress. However, while she brings this idea to light, Levy's discussion is rather brief.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ McCracken, "Dress Color at the Court of Elizabeth I," 517.

⁴⁵ Harvey, *Men in Black*, 10.

⁴⁶ This is the term by Tarnya Cooper's definition, includes merchants, artisans, physicians, lawyers, clergymen, scholars, architects, etc., living in a city or urban area. Cooper, *Citizen Portrait*, 4.

⁴⁷ Allison Levy, "Framing Widows: Mourning, Gender and Portraiture in Early Modern Florence," in *Widowhood and Visual Culture in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Allison Levy (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2003), 211-232.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 229. While Levy has written on English widows, this particular book focuses on Florentine widows. For Levy's work on English widows, see "Good Grief: Widow Portraiture and Masculine Anxiety in Early Modern England," in *The Single Woman in Medieval and Early Modern England: Her Life and*

This thesis will examine the use of the sober black costume in portraits of Elizabethan women. After this introductory chapter, the chapters will examine the use of the costume by three different sections of society. The second chapter will examine the use of the costume by elite widows, using the dowager countess Bess of Hardwick as its prime focus. This chapter will introduce the sober costume of elite widows and consider what the costume meant to English society, looking particularly at a portrait of Bess as a widow completed c.1590. Could the costume have the same meaning as men's sober costume, as first suggested by Levy? Or does the costume meaning something entirely different? The third chapter builds upon the second. It examines the use of the sober costume by Elizabethan benefactresses, focusing particularly on Joyce Frankland. Frankland was a widow who endowed several Cambridge and Oxford colleges upon her death. In order to honor her, several of the colleges put up portraits of her in remembrance of her good deeds. In these portraits, Frankland is portrayed in a sober costume. Although Frankland's widowhood was vital to her role as a benefactress, the chapter examines the role of the sober costume in the setting of an institution. The last chapter complicates the meaning of Elizabethan women's sober costume by examining a portrait of Queen Elizabeth I in sober dress. Many scholars have examined the famous Siena Sieve portrait of Queen Elizabeth (1583) but none have included an in-depth analysis of her sober costume. This chapter investigates how the sober costume may alter the meaning of the portrait. While scholars have begun to explore the power of sober costume, few have expressly examined the use of the costume in Elizabethan portraits of women and how the costume's significance can benefit further reading of the portraits.

Representation, eds. Laurel Amtower and Dorothea Kehler (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2003), 147-166.

The conclusion, and indeed the thesis as a whole, attempts to remedy this, filling a gap in art historical scholarship and offering a framework of interpretive possibilities for future researchers.

CHAPTER II

WIDOWS

Throughout the Tudor era, mourning clothes for widows were traditionally sober.⁴⁹ Early modern literature established widowhood as a negative status and used the sober costume as a sign of status's deprivation. In a mid-sixteenth century play, for instance, the titular character of *Respublica* symbolically recovers her wealth and subsequently her well-being by the physical act of changing from her sober widow costume to a "gaye" costume. *Respublica*'s widowhood, as Meg Twycross has suggested, is the cause of her misfortune.⁵⁰ On the advice of *Misericordia* and *Iustitia*, *Respublica* sheds her widow costume, donning a new "gorgeouslye decked" costume.

Misericordia: Nowe, Sisters, goe wee and *Respublica* with vs
to be Newe appareled otherwise then thus.
Iustitia: Come on, *Respublica*, with vs to wealth from woe;
godde hathe geven vs in charge that yt muste be soo.⁵¹

Mourning clothes were instantly recognizable and *Respublica*'s costume visually associated her with a particular group in society.⁵² Male anxiety created the image of the widow as an unheaded, sexually insatiable woman who needed to be controlled.⁵³

However, as is often the case, the many treatises about the depravity of widowhood

⁴⁹ Some exceptions see Lou Taylor, *Mourning Dress: A Costume and Social History* (Boston: George Allen and Unwin, 1983), 65-105.

⁵⁰ "A nation without a head suffers the same sense of bewilderment and helplessness as bereaved woman." Meg Twycross, "The Widow and Nemesis: Costuming Two Allegorical Figures in a Play for Queen Mary Tudor," *The Yearbook of English Studies*, 43 Early English Drama (2013), 271.

⁵¹ *Respublica A.D. 1553, A Play on the Social Condition of England at the Accession of Queen Mary*, ed, Leonard A. Magnus (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., Limited, 1905), 1425-1428.

⁵² Twycross, "The Widow and Nemesis," 265.

⁵³ See Charles Carlton, "The Widow's Tale: Male Myths and Female Reality in 16th and 17th Century England," *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 10, no. 2 (Summer, 1978), 118-129.

emphasize the power and relative independence that widows actually possessed. Using Bess of Hardwick as an example of a powerful Elizabethan widow, this chapter argues that ambivalent attitudes towards widows in Tudor England created opportunities for widows to comply with patriarchal doctrine while at the same time subvert standard gender roles. Like that of *Respublica*, a woman's status was markedly different when she was portrayed as a widow. The widow costume did indeed signify a change in a woman's fortune, however, unlike the case of *Respublica*, it is the donning of the widow costume and shedding of the "gaye" and "goregeouslye decked" costume in the portrait that emphasizes the widow's actual power.

Widow portraiture is a distinct category in the field of early modern portraiture. Allison Levy described the category as a woman "depicted in a three-quarter or bust-length pose; she is set in profile or frontally against a plain, dark background; she is depicted with a sober or severe expression; and, most importantly, she is simply veiled and dressed in dark colors."⁵⁴ Widow portraiture and mourning costume are both ways in which women were turned into symbols and used as devices of remembrance. Some anxious males perceived widows as un-headed, sexually hungry women who, left unbridled, could do serious societal damage. Husband's feared that after their death, their wives would remarry, making them a "cuckold" even in death; for most, the image of

⁵⁴ Allison Levy, "Framing Widows," 224. See also Julian Litten, *The English Way of Death: The Common Funeral Since 1450* (London: Robert Hale, 1991), 13. However, as Allison Levy emphasized, widow portraiture, especially in Elizabethan England, is still a vastly understudied portrait type, see Levy's chapter "Good Grief," 147-166. Furthermore, the chapter of this thesis, which emphasizes the widow's self-fashioning, will examine widow portraits commissioned by the widow. However, attributing widow portraits commissioned by widows remains particularly difficult. Many records simply no longer exist. Susan James does an excellent job of examining funerary monuments commissioned by widows. James identified the sitter in many Elizabethan portraits as also the patron, linking portraits of females with female patrons. Unfortunately, this process, while tempting, is incorrect, as the sitter is not always the patron in portraits. For James's study see Susan E. James, *The Feminine Dynamic in English Art, 1485-1603* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009), 32-45.

their wife with another man was unthinkable.⁵⁵ In her widow portrait, the black mourning costume emphasized the widow's chastity to her deceased husband. Furthermore, the widow became an integral element of perpetuating her husband's memory upon his death.⁵⁶ Indeed, as Levy pointed out, men sometimes prematurely commissioned widow portraits of their wives to ensure their memory. In the portrait, the wife became his "perpetual mourner."⁵⁷

As a widow, an Elizabethan woman could control her deceased husband's properties. Barbara Todd pointed out, "because of the cultural preference for elementary conjugal households [in England], widows could not easily be put under control of another male. Long-standing tradition supported the contrary notion that the widow should if at all possible be encouraged to head her own household, either as successor to her husband or in a new home."⁵⁸ A widow was a *feme sole*, free of the "imposed containment" of a *feme covert*, whose property and being belonged to her husband.⁵⁹ The power experienced by a wealthy widow on the occasion of her husband's death perpetuated male anxiety.⁶⁰

⁵⁵ Carlton, "The Widow's Tale," 125. Carlton further argued that some men stipulated in their wills that their wives would not receive an inheritance if they remarried.

⁵⁶ On widows as rememberers, especially in the ritual of dying a "good death" see J. S. W. Helt, "Memento Mori: Death, Widowhood and Remembering in Early Modern England," in *Widowhood and Visual Culture in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Allison Levy (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2003), 39-54.

⁵⁷ Levy, "Framing Widows," 223 and Levy, "Good Grief," 149. In some cases, the wife died before her husband, even after the widow portrait was created.

⁵⁸ Barbara J. Todd, "The Virtuous Widow in Protestant England," in *Widowhood in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. Sandra Cavallo and Lyndan Warner (New York: Routledge), 66. See also Carlton, 126.

⁵⁹ Pearl Hogrefe, *Tudor Women: Commoners and Queens* (Ames: The Iowa State University Press, 1975), 16.

⁶⁰ Carlton, "The Widow's Tale," 126.

The sober widow costume, recommended in advice and etiquette books, also served to quell the dangers of the widow. Juan Luis Vives's treatise on the instruction of women was translated into English in 1585 and enjoyed popularity at the Elizabethan court. In *A Verie Fruitfull and Pleasant Booke, Called the Instruction of a Christian Woman*, Vives's advised that widows should appear in unadorned costumes because adornment was only worn to attract and please husbands:

All that adornment and personal care should now be gone, which, while the husband was living, might have been seen as a desire to please him...A widow should adorn herself much less, since she should not be seeking a match and should not readily accept it when it is offered. A good woman approaches a second marriage unwillingly and reluctantly, compelled by unavoidable necessity. Besides, in a virgin, personal adornment is tolerated; in a widow, it is repugnant.⁶¹

Vives's advice emphasized the masculine fear of being a "cuckold", suggesting that decoration only attracted men and lovers. As Meg Twycross has suggested, the mourning clothes of widows were a recognizable symbol. "Their difference from everyday garb also confers a special status on the wearer, a kind of apartheid, almost a taboo. They mark the widow out as separate."⁶² Traditionally, upper class widows wore a barbe (a white cloth that covered the neck and bottom of the chin), a black or white hood, a black mantle (a cloak-like garment worn over the shoulders) as well as a black gown with little added decoration.⁶³ However, as the sixteenth century progressed the appropriate attire for

⁶¹ Juan Luis Vives, *A Verie Fruitfull and Pleasant Booke, Called the Instruction of a Christian Woman*, trans. Richard Hyrde (London: Robert Walde-Graue, 1585, Early English Books Online), 311.

⁶² Twycross, "The Widow and Nemsis," 269.

⁶³ Margaret Beaufort (d. 1509) is a good example of the earlier Tudor mourning clothes. See Margaret Beaufort's c.1509 portrait in the National Portrait Gallery, London. Although, Beaufort was actually a vowess at the time, Maria Hayward argued that the costumes of the widow and vowess were extremely similar. Maria Hayward, *Rich Apparel: Clothing and the Law in Henry VIII's England* (Burlington VT: Ashgate, 2009), 244-249.

widows also became less formulaic and was applied less strictly.⁶⁴ In result, all black-colored clothing (with the inclusion of white accessories) became one of the most obvious signifiers of mourning.⁶⁵

Bess of Hardwick was one of the most powerful women in Elizabethan England. In a widow portrait dated to after 1590, Bess is portrayed as a powerful dowager countess (fig. 2.1).⁶⁶ The three-quarter-length portrait depicts Bess in a high-necked, long sleeved, black costume. A line of black cloth-covered buttons is sewn down the middle of her doublet-like bodice. The flounce, the shallow ruffle around the waist of her skirt, indicates that Bess is wearing a French farthingale, which was popular during the 1590s.⁶⁷ Certainly, the features may have faded and changed color over time. However, the darkness of her costume coupled with the dark background serves to increase the presence of Bess: the viewer becomes overwhelmed by black. An opaque, highly

⁶⁴ Taylor pointed out that mourning wear worn during the funeral was likely much more extravagant than clothes worn during the mourning period after the death. However, little literary evidence of what a widow wore during the mourning period survives. Taylor, *Mourning Dress*, 79.

⁶⁵ See Twycross, "The Widow and Nemesis," 267-268 and Litten, *The English Way of Death*, 13.

⁶⁶ Traditionally, Bess's portrait is dated to after 1590, the year of the Earl's death. Erna Auerbach believed that the painting was certainly done in the style of Rowland Locket, but was reluctant to fully attribute the painting to him. See Erna Auerbach, *Nicholas Hilliard* (Boston: Boston Book & Art Shop, 1961), 262. However, Roy Strong contested this idea, suggesting that although the account lists payments of 40s, the standard price of one of Hilliard's miniatures, "we cannot exclude the possibility that one or all these pictures were large-scale as prices for them fluctuated so widely according to size, work involved and framing." See Roy Strong, *Artists of the Tudor Court*, 128. Rowland Locket was a highly skilled miniaturist and portrait painter of the Elizabethan and Early Jacobean periods whose elite patrons included Elizabeth I. He was the pupil of the master painter, Nicholas Hilliard. Both Locket and Hilliard's name show up in the Hardwick accounts from 1591-1597. See Lesley Lewis, *The Thomas More Family Group Portraits after Holbein* (Herefordshire: Gracewing, 1998), and Strong, *Artists of the Tudor Court*, 128-9. Locket also received a commission of more than 30 paintings by Bess's son, William Cavendish in 1608-1613. Although Auerbach believed that these payments were for miniatures, it nevertheless puts both master painters under the employment of the dowager countess during the traditional dating of the portrait. (Auerbach, *Nicholas Hilliard*, 254-55). That Bess was the patron of her own widow portrait is certainly very likely. Bess's choice to hire one of the most famous portraitists of late sixteenth-century England heightens the importance of the painting.

⁶⁷ Ashelford, *The Art of Dress*, 35.

starched white ruff separates Bess's head from her body and is mimicked by the smaller ruffs at her wrists. A simple black hood decorated by a thin gold biliment on the front edge covers her red hair. The only jewelry is a long, five-stranded pearl necklace. The soft highlights of her costume indicate a velvet fabric, a cloth that was heavily regulated by sumptuary laws.

Bess was born around 1527 to a family of the minor gentry. After four marriages, each of which marked a further rise in status, Bess became the Countess of Shrewsbury at the age of 40 in 1567.⁶⁸ However, while her last marriage to George Talbot, the sixth earl of Shrewsbury, further solidified her and her children's future as elite Elizabethans,⁶⁹ it dissolved unhappily and for the last half of their marriage the couple lived separately.⁷⁰ In 1590, the sixth earl of Shrewsbury died and Bess finally became the powerful dowager countess portrayed in her portrait.

Scholarship celebrates Bess as one of the greatest female architectural patrons of the early modern era. Indeed, during her life Bess completed two great country houses,

⁶⁸ Bess's father died early in her life and although her mother remarried, Bess was assured little financial security especially in regards to a dowry. Bess's first marriage was at the age of 14 to an even younger husband, 13-year-old Robert Barlow. Barlow died two years after their marriage and his death ensured Bess some property as part of her jointure and his inheritance. In 1547, Bess married again, this time to William Cavendish, a member of Henry VIII's Privy Council and later a Treasurer of the Queen's Chamber under Mary I's reign. While she was married to Cavendish, Bess gave birth to eight children, six of whom survived to adulthood. During their marriage, the Cavendishes began construction of a country house at Chatsworth, Bess's first architectural project. However, by his death in 1557, Cavendish had fallen into large debt and Bess was left responsible for the sum. Although she was again a poor widow, Bess's position within society had greatly increased. However Bess's need to remarry was vital as she now had six children to look after, all under the age of ten. In 1559, she married Sir William St. Loe, a courtier who held the title of Elizabeth I's Grand Butler. St. Loe's position and wealth not only provided for her children (one of whom was married during her time as Lady St. Loe), the continued work on Chatsworth, and financial security, but also allowed Bess to serve as a Lady of the Bedchamber for Elizabeth I. The two lived happily until St. Loe died in 1565. For more on Bess's biography see David Durant, *Bess of Hardwick: Portrait of an Elizabethan Dynast* (London: Peter Owen Publishing, 1977).

⁶⁹ Bess also secured the union of two of her children with Talbot's.

⁷⁰ The problem derived most likely in part from the strenuous task of being guardians of Mary Queen of Scots for 16 years of her imprisonment.

Chatsworth and Hardwick Hall.⁷¹ Moreover, Bess was dynastically ambitious, a characteristic that ultimately led to a short imprisonment in the Tower of London. In 1574, Bess arranged for her daughter Elizabeth Cavendish to marry Charles Stuart, Lord Darnley, who was the brother of Henry Stuart, the late husband of Mary Queen of Scots. The only issue from the marriage, Arabella Stuart (cousin to James VI of Scotland and granddaughter to Bess), was in line for the English throne. Bess was charged with the custody of Arabella in 1582, following the death of the girl's parents. In Bess's care, Arabella was unsuccessfully molded to become queen and the endeavor was one of Bess's only public failures.

Bess's rise in status and power is emphasized by her other portraits at Hardwick Hall. An inventory of the house completed in 1601 recorded three portraits of Bess. While one of the portraits is certainly Bess as the dowager countess in a sober mourning costume, the other two depict Bess prior to widowhood. The earliest portrait (c.1560-1569) depicts Bess as Lady St. Loe (fig. 2.2). This three-quarter-length portrait depicts Bess in a fur lined, short sleeved black gown, closed with gold toggles. The sleeves of her white bodice or undergown are richly embroidered with a pattern in red. Her French hood is decorated with pearls and embroidery and a short pearl necklace is depicted around her neck. She clasps a pair of gloves in her hands with rings adorning her fingers, including a wedding ring on the third finger of the right hand.⁷²

⁷¹ On Bess as architectural patron, see Sara French, "A Widow Building in Elizabethan England: Bess of Hardwick at Hardwick Hall," in *Widowhood and Visual Culture in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Allison Levy (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2003), 161-176, and Alice T. Friedman, "Architecture, Authority, and the Female Gaze: Planning and Representation in the Early Modern Country House," *Assemblage* 18 (Aug., 1992), 40-61.

⁷² Ninya Mikhaila and Jane Malcolm Davies, *The Tudor Tailor: Reconstructing 16th Century Dress*, (London: Batsford, 2006), 31.

As Lady St. Loe, Bess was a Lady of the Bedchamber for Elizabeth. Clothing was especially significant while in the service of the Queen who often gave her ladies-in-waiting clothes as gifts.⁷³ Furthermore, “a key obligation for the courtier,” Anna Reynolds argued, “was to reflect the glory of the monarch through splendid attire.”⁷⁴ The costume is visually similar to the early portraits of the Queen and such emulation of the queen’s clothing was a compliment.⁷⁵ Moreover, Bess’s extravagantly adorned costume paralleled that of a queen, reinforcing her own new status.

The second of Bess’s portraits as an elite courtier was painted c.1580 while Bess was the Countess of Shrewsbury and her husband was still living (fig. 2.3). Although her costume is black in this half-length portrait, it is richly ornamented and its non-sober decoration emphasizes its non-mourning connotation. In the portrait, Bess is shown in an over gown that is lined with ermine, a fur reserved for the elite, indicative of her new titular status.⁷⁶ Large gold buttons on her undergarment and cascading strands of an elegant necklace emphasize her status as countess. Her headpiece features a prominent band of gold decoration and pearls, simulating a crown.

Both portraits feature Bess turned to the viewer’s left indicating that these portraits were probably not meant as pendant portraits to the respective husbands.⁷⁷

⁷³ Arnold, *Queen Elizabeth’s Wardrobe Unlock’d*, 98-104.

⁷⁴ Reynolds, *In Fine Style*, 16.

⁷⁵ At one time, the painting was erroneously identified as Mary, Queen of Scots. The inscription MARIA REGINA is still visible on the left center of the panel. See *Elizabeth I and Her People*, ed. Tarnya Cooper, 28.

⁷⁶ The more spotted the ermine on the costume, the more important the wearer. See Reynolds, *In Fine Style*, 156.

⁷⁷ Elizabeth Honig argues that women in Elizabethan portraits are “nearly always shown turning towards the viewer’s left, as if toward the center from the right-hand side of a pair.” This is related to heraldry, which ascribed the left hand side as dominant, “the man is placed to the women’s right in the more

However, while Bess's costumes certainly emphasize her high status, the decoration still objectifies her. Breward argued that the display of wealth on the body of the female became more important in the Elizabethan era and the noblewoman became the "visual communicator of family wealth."⁷⁸ The three portraits of Bess mark her transformation from lower gentry to countess. However, while the two earlier portraits portray Bess as a wealthy woman, her final portrait represents her new autonomy.

In the final portrait, Bess embraced the role as mourner for several reasons. First, there was a social obligation to mourn the dead. Furthermore, after the death of her husband, her daughter's husband, Gilbert Talbot, the new earl of Shrewsbury, denied Bess her rightful portion of her husband's estate. In a letter to Lord Burghley, dated, April 11, 1591, Bess wrote about her unstable relationship with Gilbert:

My moste honorable good Lord; your Lordships ould sarvante my good frend master Bradshaw coming by me in his retorne toward the cowrte, I mighte not suffare him to pas without my Letters of moste hartye thanks to your Lordship for all your honorable favors towards me, and withall to segnefye partly to your Lordship how matters now reste betwene the earle of shrousbury and me, which I should have thoughte fully concluded yf be fore I had not had tryall of his strange and unkynde dealing; the xjth of marche Laste master markham being sente hether to me from the earle of shrousbury and my daughter for to make offars in respecte of my wedows parte, I tould him yt was in veane for me to enter into taulke with him for that the earle hertofore had refused such articles as he had set downe;⁷⁹

important position." Elizabeth Honig, "In Memory: Lady Dacre and Pairing by Hans Eworth," in *Renaissance Bodies: The Human Figure in English Culture c.1540-1660*, ed. Lucy Gent and Nigel Llewellyn (London: Reaktion Books, 1990), 67 and 242, n. 32. While Bess's position may indicate that her portrait was not meant to be a pendant portrait, the limited evidence of the origin of the two portraits halts further interpretation on their original intentions than provided her in this essay.

⁷⁸ Breward, *The Culture of Fashion*, 60-61.

⁷⁹ Bess of Hardwick, Countess of Shrewsbury to William Cecil, Lord Burghley, 11 April 1591, in *Bess of Hardwick's Letters: The Complete Correspondence c.1550-1608*, ed. Alison Wiggon, et al. University of Glasgow, web development by Katherine Rogers, University of Sheffield Humanities Research Institute (April 2013), accessed on July 2014, <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/letter.jsp?letter=159>.

Although Shrewbury made no mention of her in his will, Bess was entitled to a third of his property according to English law as well as her jointure.⁸⁰ By representing herself in the portrait as the mourning widow of his father, Bess may have hoped to regain favor with her son-in-law. Although widows were in a powerful position, they still faced more obstacles than men.⁸¹ Widows often had to go to court to settle inheritances and money issues. “Counsel for both plaintiffs and defendants,” Tim Stretton argued, “drew upon stereotypical images to bolster their arguments, suggesting, for example, that widow opponents were loud, immodest and sexually incontinent, or that they were bad mothers, guilty of shaming the memories of their late husbands (accusations of a type rarely leveled at widowers).”⁸² Thus, widows had to thwart negative stereotypes. By presenting herself as a widow, soberly dressed, Bess presents herself as a “good widow”, who, according to Barbara Todd, is “the most honorable because in spite of her freedom she has been able to achieve the greatest desolation or emptiness.”⁸³ Todd further explained that a good widow is “the woman who is desolate *in spite of* worldly possessions.”⁸⁴ Thus, Bess presents herself as the good widow, a woman who despite her wealth and position in society still mourns her husband.

However, mourning clothes could also draw upon masculine definitions, especially those related to the color black. Indeed, as Levy suggested, a widow’s black

⁸⁰ Hogrefe, *Tudor Women*, 13. Sally Livingston, *Marriage, Property and Women’s Narratives*, Basingstoke : Palgrave Macmillan, 2012, 64

⁸¹ Tim Stretton, “Widows at Law in Tudor and Stuart England,” in *Widowhood in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. Sandra Cavallo and Lyndan Warner (New York: Routledge), 194.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 205.

⁸³ Todd, “The Virtuous Widow,” 72.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 73.

costume could also represent masculine characteristics. Although black symbolized mourning for women, black symbolized power for men.⁸⁵ If men could use black for mourning purposes as well as signifying ideal masculine characteristics, “might not women, in turn, re-appropriate that same black costume, claiming for themselves the authoritative and empowering gestures initially reserved for men in black?”⁸⁶ Indeed, the myths of widows created by male anxiety were caused by the power widowhood gave to women, particularly wealthy women. In turn, the very anxiety that fueled these myths also served to masculinize widows. By remembering her husband, a widow internalized his authority and assumed some of it herself.⁸⁷ “The widow,” argued Levy, “was guaranteed a place, albeit a limited one, within the public realm, where she was often able to reformulate her imposed containment, finding herself at the threshold of unlimited opportunity; this pregnant moment arose precisely upon her husband’s death and continued until her own.”⁸⁸ The death of a woman’s husband freed her from the law of coverture; the widow could now control property that once belonged to her husband.

Bess of Hardwick’s sober costume (with the addition of the chain of pearls, highlighted by the contrasting blackness of her gown) fuses the feminine and masculine qualities associated with widowhood. As Karen Raber argued in her article, “Chains of Pearls: Gender, Property, Identity,” pearls carried a heavy connotation, not only implying

⁸⁵ See Harvey, *Men in Black* and McCracken, “Dress Color at the Court of Elizabeth”. As Harvey explains, the power of men’s black did grow from a context of grief, however, by the Elizabethan era, men could wear black as a sign of power, rather than specifically mourning. Harvey, *Men in Black*, 71-114.

⁸⁶ Levy, “Framing Widows,” 229.

⁸⁷ French, “A Widow Building in Elizabethan England,” 162.

⁸⁸ Levy, “Good Grief,” 154.

chastity, but also patriarchal authority, related to male anxiety about being a “cuckold.”⁸⁹ However, women in early modern England were actually able to thwart the oppressive masculine connotation, assuming the symbol for their own, self-fashioning means. The pearls in Bess’s portrait, Raber argued, “turn away from traditions of chastity, and instead proclaim [Bess’s] economic success, her triumph over the vagaries of the world. They are a sign of respite from the gender directives of her culture, into self-determining freedom and wealth.”⁹⁰ Though she raised interesting points, Raber’s reading of Bess’s use of pearls is too absolute. Indeed, while the pearls may certainly become symbols of self-possession rather than possession by a man, pearls featured on widow costumes helped the sitter avert the negative stereotypes of the widow common in early modern England. By representing herself as chaste, Bess could assert her right to remain a widow. Thus, the chain of pearls not only represents her power, autonomy, and wealth, but also her chastity and dedication to her deceased spouse.

Other portraits of widows fuse masculine and feminine characteristics. Mary Neville fashioned herself as a mourning widow in a 1558 portrait by Hans Eworth (fig. 2.4). The three-quarter-length portrait features Neville sitting, as if caught in act of writing. She is dressed in a black closed-bodied gown and the only sign of material decoration appears on the blackwork of her bodice. She is shown with a sable around her shoulders, showcasing her high status. A portrait of Thomas Fiennes, Baron Dacre, her deceased husband, in the background emphasizes her widowhood. Mary Neville is

⁸⁹ As Raber points out, although pearls are traditionally associated with chastity, chastity is used to define a woman in terms of male property, “indicating proprietary control, sexual policing, bodily exploitation, and ownership.” Karen Raber, “Chains of Pearls: Gender, Property, Identity,” in *Ornamentalism: The Art of Renaissance Accessories*, ed. Bella Mirabella (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2011), 160.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 172.

depicted as the “good widow,” carrying on her husband’s works as he looks on from his portrait in the background. As his widow, she perpetuates his memory, ensuring that he will not be forgotten.

Elizabeth Honig argued that Mary Neville is represented as a “manly woman.”⁹¹ She is caught in the process of reading and writing, which are associated with paintings of men, not women.⁹² Furthermore, Honig pointed out that Neville assumes her husband’s masculine dominance by including his portrait in the background.⁹³ According to the Elizabethan treatise writer Edmund Tilney, upon marriage the husband “by little and little must gently procure that he maye also steale away hir private will, and appetite, so that of two bodies there may be made one onely hart.”⁹⁴ However, in death the process is reversed, Neville (the primary figure in the portrait) absorbs her husband (the secondary figure); in death he becomes subordinate to her.⁹⁵

Eighteen years before Neville commissioned the portrait, King Henry VIII had revoked the Fiennes family’s title.⁹⁶ In 1558, Queen Elizabeth I restored the Dacre family’s fortune and honor. Honig believed that this was one of the reasons Neville commissioned her portrait. Neville’s representation of herself as the widow of Thomas Fiennes in 1558 is important because after Fiennes’s death in 1541, Mary remarried not

⁹¹ Honig, “In Memory: Lady Dacre and Pairing,” 62.

⁹² Ibid., In fact Honig points out that this is the only painting of an Elizabethan women shown doing both reading and writing. Ibid., 250 n.7.

⁹³ Ibid., 65. By including a portrait of their deceased husbands, widow could perpetuate his memory and thus he would be immortalized. See Levy, “Framing Widows,” 223.

⁹⁴ Edmund Tilney, *Brief & pleasant discourse*, p. B vi verso, as cited by Honig, “In Memory: Lady Dacre and Pairing,” 65.

⁹⁵ Honig, “In Memory: Lady Dacre and Pairing,” 65.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 60. Thomas Fiennes, Baron Dacre, was executed in 1541 for the murder of a local gamekeeper.

once but twice. Thus, in reality, Mary was not Fiennes's "good widow," despite what she portrays in her portrait. However, by re-constructing herself as Fiennes's widow, Neville emphasizes her connection to the newly restored Dacre title. Neville once again claims the title of Baroness Dacre, even if it is only that of a dowager baroness.

While it was in fact her son, Gregory Fiennes, whose title was restored, Mary Neville established herself as the head of the Dacre dynasty. In 1559, a year after Eworth's widow portrait, Neville commissioned the Flemish artist to represent her again, this time with her son, the newly reinstated tenth Baron Dacre (fig. 2.5). In the double portrait, Neville is dressed in a rich black satin dress, guarded with black velvet. Her sleeves are adorned with gold aglets and jewels. The ruffs around her neck and wrists are delicately trimmed with blackwork and gold, minutely described by Eworth's brushwork. Furthermore, the biliment of Neville's French hood is even more encrusted with pearls, gems, and gold. Neville prominently displays seven rings on her fingers. The largest of which sits at the tip of the forefinger of her left hand and symbolizes her dynastic authority.⁹⁷ While Neville's costume is certainly rich, it is not overly extravagant; its decoration is restrained. Her costume appears much more sober than her son's and the juxtaposition of the two figures encourages comparison of their costumes.

The newly reinstated Baron Dacre, Gregory Fiennes, is featured in an extravagantly rich costume. His gold colored doublet is slashed and pinked. He wears an ermine lined jacket accentuated by gold aglets on the sleeves over his doublet. Although Fiennes's costume emphasizes his high status, it also feminizes him, especially when juxtaposed to the image of his soberly dressed mother. "The emphasis on her son's

⁹⁷ Honig, "In Memory: Lady Dacre and Pairing," 66.

superficiality and almost feminine youthfulness,” Honig argued, “stresses the contrasting masculine consolidation of self which power, cemented by experience, has given to Mary Neville.”⁹⁸ This is emphasized by the choice of portrait type, a side-by-side composition is traditionally associated with a marriage portrait. However, the traditional marriage composition is upset by the reversal of gender placement; in Elizabethan conventions the man is supposed to be on the dominant left and the woman on the right. Neville asserts her authority by not only taking on the more masculine sober costume, but by physically taking the man’s place. Gregory, in his extravagant costume, becomes the “treasure which she displays.”⁹⁹

Neville’s sober costume in both portraits emphasizes her right as head of the Dacre family. “In both of her portraits,” Honig concluded, “Mary Neville claims the masculine privilege. Virilified by age and power, by marriage and especially by widowhood, she finally occupies her first husband’s place as the keeper of the Dacre dynasty.”¹⁰⁰ In the earlier portrait, Neville, as the “good widow” of Thomas Fiennes, emphasized her right and ability as the vessel of her husband. As his widow, she absorbs his masculine power. Neville showcases this power as the head of the family in her double portrait with her son. Her masculinity is emphasized as she physically takes the place of the man in her sober costume.

⁹⁸ Honig, “In Memory: Lady Dacre and Pairing,” 67. Indeed, Fiennes’s costume is visually similar to Bess of Hardwick’s earliest portrait (c.1560-1569).

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 66.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 68.

In a c.1647 triptych commissioned by Lady Anne Clifford, Clifford also presents herself as a masculine widow (fig. 2.6).¹⁰¹ The triptych centers on the life of Clifford. In the left hand panel, Clifford is depicted as a young woman in 1605, the year of her father's death. The significance of the year not only establishes a theme of mourning (as suggested by Levy¹⁰²) but also emphasizes Clifford's role as the rightful heir to her father, George Clifford, third Earl of Cumberland's title and estate.¹⁰³ The middle panel represents the Clifford family in 1589. Her mother, father, and two older brothers are depicted, as are framed portraits of three of her maternal aunts. The gesture of Clifford's mother's left hand implies that Clifford exists in the womb.¹⁰⁴ The right panel depicts Clifford in 1646, at the age of 56, dressed in black, with portraits of her two husbands hanging in the background (fig. 2.7). While Clifford's first husband was dead, her second husband was still very much alive.¹⁰⁵ However, Clifford's black sober dress is a symbol of her mourning and status as a widow. Levy pointed out that Clifford was already

¹⁰¹ The triptych, an unusual and powerful format for secular painting, was displayed at Clifford's main residence, Appleby Castle. According to Jane Eade, the triptych was displayed in the Great Hall and was visible to most visitors. Jane Eade, "The Triptych Portrait in England 1585-1646," *The British Art Journal* 6, no. 2 (Autumn 2005), 6. While Clifford's triptych is not Elizabethan, the triptych celebrates an early modern English widow as the head of her family and provides another example of a female patron using the sober mourning costume as a device of self-fashioning. See Katherine Osler Acheson, "The Modernity of the Early Modern: The Example of Anne Clifford," in *Discontinuities: New Essays on Renaissance Literature and Criticism*, ed. Viviana Comensoli and Paul Stevens (Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 27-51 and Levy, "Good Grief" (2003), 147-166.

¹⁰² Levy, "Good Grief," 158.

¹⁰³ Clifford and her mother Margaret Russell fought for many years to reclaim the title "on the basis that baronies were entailed upon the heir of the body, regardless of gender." However, she was denied by the king and forced to outlive her male relatives. Clifford finally achieved her goal in 1643 after her last male relative died. See Acheson, "The Modernity of the Early Modern," 38.

¹⁰⁴ As Levy cites, Clifford dates this panel to June 1589, a month after her conception, Levy, "Good Grief," 160.

¹⁰⁵ Clifford first married Richard Sackville, third Earl of Dorset and after his death, married Philip Herbert, fourth Earl of Pembroke and Earl of Montgomery. Levy, "Good Grief" 160.

estranged from her second husband, and that by featuring his portrait within her own portrait, “Anne seems already to be in a state of mourning for him.”¹⁰⁶ Choosing to be represented as a widow, Clifford established her (relative) independence and absorption of her husbands’ masculine privilege.

Furthermore, Clifford commissioned the portrait after she finally gained the title of Baroness Clifford, her father’s title. Anne’s stance, as Levy has pointed out, in the right panel echoes the stance of her father in the middle panel.¹⁰⁷ She is thus represented as the new patriarch of the Clifford dynasty (both of her brothers had died at a young age). According to Katherine Acheson, “She is not only the heir, but also the wise and elder progenitor of the Clifford family.”¹⁰⁸ However, Clifford is not only parallel to her father, but to her mother as well. She is, in Acheson’s phrase, the “sum of her parents’ parts.”¹⁰⁹ Acheson pointed out that in the right panel, Clifford wears her mother’s pearls as a girdle, the lines of which resemble those of her father’s sword belt.¹¹⁰ Thus, pearls are Clifford’s sword and chastity is her weapon. Furthermore, as Levy suggested, Clifford situates herself in a markedly female genealogy, emphasized by the depiction of her aunts and the central placement of her mother.¹¹¹ She also noted that “the paradoxical nature of her particular manner of self-fashioning can be understood as a symptom of her

¹⁰⁶ Levy, “Good Grief,” 160.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 162.

¹⁰⁸ Acheson, “The Modernity of the Early Modern,” 42.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 41.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 42.

¹¹¹ Levy, “Good Grief,” 161-2.

widowhood or, at least, of her ability to mourn.”¹¹² Clifford acts in the feminine role of perpetuating the memory of her husband(s), however, she is also visually represented as the new patriarch of the family, a decidedly masculine role.¹¹³ Clifford’s triptych celebrates the ambiguous role created by widowhood and the act of mourning.

In conclusion, the male anxiety surrounding widows was fueled by the power widowhood gave to women. As widows, rich women in England could perform on a similar level as men with command over their own property. Bess’s portrait celebrates her success: outliving four husbands, producing and raising many children who lived to adulthood, establishing several dynasties, and producing a potential heir to the English throne. However, Bess was still obligated under social conditions to be a widow and to maintain her high status by maintaining her status as a widow. Like Neville and Clifford, Bess had to play the part of the “good widow” to solidify her rights as the dowager Countess of Shrewsbury. Thus, although widows were faced with the stigma of widowhood, they still chose to be represented in sober costume in the portraits they commissioned. The widow costume references a compliance with patriarchal doctrine, but also symbolizes absorbed patriarchal power. On one hand the sober widow costume marked a widow with a social stigma created by male anxiety, but on the other hand it also represented the most powerful time in a woman’s life.

¹¹² Levy, “Good Grief,” 164.

¹¹³ Ibid.

CHAPTER III

BENEFACTRESSES

In Thomas Heywood's play, *If You Know Not Me, You Know Nobody* (part II, 1606), Dr. Alexander Nowell leads his guests on a tour of his picture gallery of "charitable citizens." While listening to Nowell's anecdotes on portraits of men, Lady Mary Ramsey, one of his guests, exclaims "Among the stories of these blessed men,/ So many that enrich your gallery,/ There are two women's pictures: what were they?" Nowell replies, "They are two that have deserv'd a memory/ Worthy the note of our posterity."¹¹⁴ They were urban elite benefactresses.¹¹⁵ Charitable giving had declined during the Elizabeth's I reign and civic portraiture evolved from the fundamental need to inspire people to give.¹¹⁶ The interest in civic portraiture blossomed in the late sixteenth century. W. K. Jordan's extensive study on the topic of charity and philanthropy in England from 1480-1660 cited that in London alone, there were one thousand one hundred documented women donors, or almost 15% of the number of benefactors.¹¹⁷ In 2007, Robert Tittler published a list of two hundred and sixty English civic portraits in an appendix of his book, *The Face of the City: Civic Portraiture and Civic Identity in Early*

¹¹⁴ Thomas Heywood, *The Dramatic Works of Thomas Heywood*, ed. John Pearson (London: John Pearson, 1874), 277. Robert Tittler's article was the first to bring this passage to my attention. See Robert Tittler, "Thomas Heywood and the Portrayal of Female Benefactors in Post-Reformation England," *Early Theatre* 11, no. 1 (January 2008), 33-52.

¹¹⁵ This term "urban elite" is used by Tarnya Cooper whose definition includes merchants, artisans, physicians, lawyers, clergymen, scholars, architects, etc., living in a city or urban area. Cooper, *Citizen Portrait*, 4.

¹¹⁶ Tittler, "Thomas Heywood," 35 and Robert Tittler, *Face of the City: Civic Portraiture and Civic Identity in Early Modern England* (New York: Manchester University Press, 2007), 32.

¹¹⁷ W. K. Jordan, *Charities of London 1480-1660: The Aspirations and the Achievements of the Urban Society* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1960), 28.

Modern England.¹¹⁸ Of these two hundred and sixty portraits, only 10.4% were of non-royal females.¹¹⁹ This number tells us that although portraits of women as benefactors were not as common as those of men, female donors did indeed exist and were represented. Furthermore, of the nineteen benefactresses, ten appear in a black sober costume, four appear in “civic red,” three are shown in a decorated/colorful costume, one appears nude, and one portrait is missing.¹²⁰ This chapter will explore the sober costume of the benefactress, looking particularly at one well-known benefactress, Joyce Frankland, and comparing her costume with the dress of other benefactresses listed in Tittler’s corpus. There are connections to and distinctions from the widow portraits treated in the previous chapter. Frankland’s appearance in sober costume is a powerful expression of widowhood. However, fixed to Frankland’s portrait and sober costume are her generous deeds as a benefactress. Thus, instead of perpetuating her husband’s memory as his widow, Frankland’s portrait serves to perpetuate her own.

This chapter’s primary focus is on civic portraiture, which for the most part concerned the urban elite. However, portraits of urban elite benefactors are

¹¹⁸ Appendix A in Tittler, *Face of the City*, 169-186.

¹¹⁹ Twenty-six non-royal portraits. This number does include copies (within the dates of 1500-1640) because Tittler’s original number of two hundred and sixty includes multiple copies. Tittler argued that royal portraiture is different than that of non-royal portraiture, of which I agree. However, the number only excludes five additional portraits.

¹²⁰ Lady Godiva (d. 1067?) rode naked through the town of Coventry in order to free its inhabitants of a toll imposed by her husband. Her portrait, possibly painted by Adam van Noort, was commissioned by Coventry in 1586 and portrays her riding through the town. See Tittler, *Face of the City*, 48-50. According to John Stow, the portrait of Alice Knevit used to hang in a school and almshouse in Radcliffe. However it was later taken down and a description and its present whereabouts are unknown. See Charles Lethbridge Kingsford, ed., *A Survey of London by John Stow, Reprinted from the Text of 1603* (2 vols, Oxford, 1908), I, 116, as cited in Tittler, *Face of the City*, 186, n. 248.

problematic.¹²¹ Patronage is critical, but in many cases it is impossible to definitively attribute these portraits to a context of civic patronage. Furthermore, determining the date that the benefactors were alive is also crucial because some portraits were created a considerable time after the benefactor's death. The skill of the painter also complicates the reading of the portrait. Untrained portrait painters or itinerant artists painted many of the civic portraits and the sobriety of dress in such cases could merely be a result of an artist's limited skills.¹²² Although using costume to date the portraits can be useful, and both Tarnya Cooper and Tittler employ such a method, scholars should exercise some degree of caution, as fashion for the urban elite adapted less quickly to stylistic trends than fashion amongst the courtly nobility. Furthermore, due to wear on the portraits, as well as the limited quality/resolution of photo reproductions of the portraits in question it is often impossible to examine the costumes as they would have originally appeared at the time of the portrait.

Black colored material dominated the everyday clothes of the urban elite as seen in the existing portraits, and as by the clothing listed in contemporary wills.¹²³ However as Cooper has pointed out, by the end of the sixteenth century and early seventeenth century the interest in black as the dominant color worn by merchant and professional elite classes was beginning to decline, and wealthier citizens were beginning to adopt and adapt styles of the nobility.¹²⁴ At the same time, civic institutions began to commission

¹²¹ When possible, the original function of the portrait will be explored. However, due to the problems of the portraits of the urban elite, it is in many cases impossible to fully know the original commission.

¹²² Robert Tittler, *Portraits, Painters, and Publics in Provincial England, 1540-1640* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 147.

¹²³ Cooper, *Citizen Portrait*, 77.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 79.

benefactor portraits.¹²⁵ Thus as the urban elite slowly began to adopt the fashion of the upper class, including the use of a broader range of color and added decoration, portraits of benefactors began to emerge featuring the sitter in a sober costume, emphasizing the importance of the costume.

In the halls of several colleges in Oxford and Cambridge hang multiple copies of Joyce Frankland's portrait (fig. 3.1).¹²⁶ The original 1586 version, which hangs in Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, features the benefactress in an all black, long-sleeved, high-necked gown. A fair-sized, thick ruff encircles her neck, while simple white linen cuffs, accented with a small ruffle of blackwork embroidery, encircle her wrists. Over her auburn hair she wears a black hood and veil, with only a simple lace edge decorating its biliment. Frankland wears little jewelry. A chain with a jeweled cross emerges from the front of her bodice. In her hands she cradles a gold watch, and a signet ring is shown on her right forefinger. In the upper left hand corner are the arms of her father, featuring the motto "suffer and serve." She looks directly at the viewer, her body only slightly turned to the right. Frankland was a widow at the time of the portrait and her sober costume is an appropriate representation of a woman in mourning. However, the reading of the costume becomes more complex when Frankland's bequests, the placement of the portrait in the institution itself, and the costumes of other benefactresses are taken into consideration. According to Taryna Cooper, Frankland "is soberly dressed and in the context of display in a university setting, her status as a philanthropic widow enabled Joyce [Frankland] to transcend traditional gender definitions, becoming both

¹²⁵ Tittler, *Face of the City*, 31-32.

¹²⁶ Including Gonville and Caius, Cambridge, Emmanuel College, Cambridge, and Brasenose College, Oxford. See Appendix A in Tittler, *Face of the City*.

mother of learning and an honorary gentleman.”¹²⁷ However, by specifically comparing Joyce Frankland’s costume with the costume of other benefactresses and the circumstance of the charity, this chapter elaborates and complicates Cooper’s reading.

Joyce Frankland was the daughter of Robert Trappes, a London goldsmith. She survived two husbands, Henry Saxey and later William Frankland, both London cloth manufacturers. From the bequests of her two deceased husbands, Joyce Frankland was left with a comfortable living. Tragedy struck in 1581 when her only surviving son, William Saxey, was thrown from a horse and killed. The death of her 23-year-old son greatly shook the widow, who lost the only person who would carry on the family name.¹²⁸ Alexander Nowell, dean of St. Paul’s and executor of her will, described how he comforted her:

And I found her cryenge, or rather howlinge continually, Oh my sonne! my sonne! And when I could by no comfortable words stay her from that cry and tearinge of her haire ; God, I thinke, put me in minde at the last to say : Comfort yourselfe good Mrs Frankland, and I will tell you how you shall have twenty good sonnes to comfort you in these your sorrowes which you take for this one sonne. To the which words only she gave eare, and lookinge up asked, How can that be? And I sayd unto her, You are a widdowe, rich and now childlesse, and there be in both universities so many pore towarde youtthes that lack exhibition, for whom if you would founde certaine fellowships and schollerships, to be bestowed uppon studious youuge men, who should be called Mrs Frankland's schollers, they would be in love towards you as deare children, and will most hartely pray to God for you duringe your life; and they and their successors after them, being still Mrs Frankland's schollers, will honour your memory for ever and ever.¹²⁹

¹²⁷ *Elizabeth I and Her People*, ed. Taryna Cooper (London: National Portrait Gallery, 2013), 150. Published in conjunction with the exhibition of the same name, shown at the National Portrait Gallery, London.

¹²⁸ Tittler, “Thomas Heywood,” 44.

¹²⁹ John Venn, *Biographical History of Gonville and Caius College, 1349-1897*, vol. III (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1901), 229.

Frankland left sizeable donations, establishing many fellowships to several educational institutions including Gonville and Caius College, Emmanuel College, Brasenose College, and Lincoln College. She also endowed a grammar school in Newport, Essex. Certainly, as Nowell told her, her endowments would secure her memory as a notable benefactress (the boys of the Grammar School in Newport are still affectionately called the “Sons of Joyce Frankland”¹³⁰). However, Frankland further ensured that she would be remembered by specific requests in her will that her portraits be displayed in the institutions that her will benefitted. Frankland bequeathed several portraits to be given to Gonville and Caius, Emmanuel and Lincoln Colleges:

Item I will if I shall have at the time of my descease three forms or pictures of my selfe that then the one of them be [...] unto the saide Gonvile and Caues Colledge and the other to Emanuell Colledge and the third to (Lincoln) Colledge to be [...] sett upp and plased in the [oratories(?)] or chappels of the saide collldges.”¹³¹

The original portrait was given to Gonville and Caius College and by 1587 copies appeared at Brasenose and Emmanuel. Furthermore, after Frankland’s death, even more copies were made.¹³² The widespread and multiple copies of this portrait emphasize its importance.

The act of a benefactor’s bequeathing his portrait along with endowments was not uncommon. Peter Simmonds, a wealthy mercer, bequeathed his portrait to the

¹³⁰ For example, see F. Thomas, *Sons of Joyce Frankland: Some Record of the Boys of Newport Grammar School, Essex* (Newport: Old Newportonian Society, 1979). According to her biography, prior to the Grammar School, Newport lacked a school. See Stephen Wright, “Frankland, Joyce (1531-1587),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), accessed on 22 Sept, 2014, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/10084>.

¹³¹ Joyce Frankland, will dated 7 February 1586, the National Archives, Kew, London. Although, according to Tittler the Lincoln College portrait was never completed. Tittler, *Portraits, Painters, and Publics*, 55.

¹³² Including one possibly by Gilbert Jackson, c. 1638, Tittler, “Thomas Heywood and the Portrayal of Female Benefactors,” 45.

Haberdasher's Hall and the Winchester Town Hall.¹³³ Simmonds explained that his portrait was to act as inspiration for others to emulate his charitable deeds, and not to satisfy his own vanity. He explained in his will, "although this may seem to smell of vainglory, yet being better construed it may be thought to a better purpose."¹³⁴ The "better purpose" of course meant that the civic portrait was a model, an instrument to instill emulation in others. However, although Simmonds said that requesting his portrait to be placed in the institution was not for purposes of self-fashioning, we must read between the lines and consider that any public portrait, especially one commissioned and given by the donor himself, would serve in such a way.

Frankland's costume in the portrait she chose to bequeath suggests multiple connotations. The most obvious connection Frankland's costume makes is to widowhood and mourning. However, although Juan Luis Vives and other writers of the time stressed the importance of a widow's sober appearance, Maria Hayward, writing on the sumptuary laws during Henry VIII's reign, argued that widows probably did not wear black all the time.¹³⁵ Thus, the sitter/patron's choice to be represented in black is important to consider. Certainly, it was the death of her husbands and her status as widow that allowed Frankland to act as benefactress with control over a substantial amount of money and property. Thus, appearing in a black sober costume not only reinforced her status as a

¹³³ Ian Archer, "The Arts and Acts of Memorialization in Early Modern London," in *Imagining Early Modern London: Perceptions and Portrayals of the City from Stow to Strype 1598-1720*, ed. J. F. Merritt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 97.

¹³⁴ Ibid. See also Peter Marshall, *Beliefs and the Dead in Reformation England* (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 2003), 285. However, neither Archer nor Marshall provide any knowledge of the existence of the portraits, perhaps suggesting that they were never completed.

¹³⁵ Maria Hayward examined one hundred and eighteen wills of widows and found that while some of their clothing was black, the majority was colored, leading Hayward to believe that some widows probably wore mourning for the appropriate period and then wore color again. Hayward, *Rich Apparel*, 244-7.

widow, but also indicated the prerequisite (widowhood) for being allowed to act as a man.

However, unlike the other benefactresses that will be considered in this chapter, Frankland's connections to the institutions that honor her through the display of her portrait did not come through either of her husbands. This suggests that Frankland's bequests were more personal and dealt less with the memory of her dead husbands. As Cooper argued, Frankland, in her bequests, followed in the footsteps of her mother. In 1568, Joanna Trappes secured four fellowships by leaving land in Kent to Lincoln College.¹³⁶ Indeed, Frankland's bequests seem to place more emphasis on her parents and dead son than on her husbands. One of the fellowship recipients at Gonville and Caius College, to be called "Joyce Frankland's chaplain" was required to make twelve sermons a year commending "the charitable devotion of me the saide Joyce Ffranklland Daughter of Robert Trappes of London, goldsmith deceased and of William Saxey my sonne." Frankland, née Trappes, also gave help to poor students whose surname was either Trappes or Saxey. Frankland had no children with her husband William Frankland, but did have a son with Henry Saxey. Leaving Franklands out of this particular bequest, but including Saxeys suggests that it is not her husbands' memory she is interested in perpetuating but her own and that of her beloved dead son.

Three other portraits, two of Joyce Frankland's parents and one of the founder of the college, hung in the halls of Gonville and Caius with Frankland's own portrait. The portraits of Robert and Joanna Trappes are dated 1554 and 1555 respectively (fig. 3.2 and 3.3). While these portraits, both commissioned by Robert Trappes, were originally

¹³⁶ Cooper, *Citizen Portrait*, 107.

intended for private display, their final function became civic through recontextualization. They were probably bequeathed to Joyce Frankland, his daughter, who in turn bequeathed them to the college in her will, asking that the portraits of her father and mother be displayed at Gonville and Caius along with her own.¹³⁷ Frankland's portrait would have then hung alongside images of her father and mother, stressing her heritage as Robert and Joanna Trappes's daughter.¹³⁸ Visually, Frankland's portrait has several parallels to the portraits of her parents. According to Cooper, the signet ring Frankland wears in her portrait is similar to the ring worn by her father on his right forefinger, evoking his status as a gentleman.¹³⁹ Furthermore, the gold watch Frankland holds in her hand may also signify her father, the goldsmith. However, Cooper overlooks an important detail. The jeweled cross worn by Frankland in her portrait is similar to the one that is depicted in her mother's portrait. In addition, the placement of the cross, emerging from the front of each woman's all black gown, is identical. Certainly, Frankland is not only evoking her father's memory, but her mother's, and her mother's status as benefactress in her own right, as well.

Joyce Frankland's sober costume bears similar resemblance to another portrait of a Gonville and Caius benefactor. The portrait of Dr. John Caius, master and one of the founding members of the college was also displayed at the college in the sixteenth

¹³⁷ Cooper, *Citizen Portrait*, 94.

¹³⁸ At the time of Joyce's will, her two brothers, Robert and Francis had already died, however, they did leave behind heirs, thus continuing the Trappes name. For their genealogy and offspring see John Burke, *A Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Commoners of Great Britain and Ireland, Enjoying Territorial Possessions Or High Official Rank...* (London: R. Bentley for Henry Colburn, 1836), vol. III, 523. Although both brothers died with children, Joyce still remains the last of the issue of Robert and Joanna Trappes, which she emphasizes in the portrait and her bequest. In this reading, it is the daughter's memory that will go on and survive, not the male line.

¹³⁹ Cooper, *Citizen Portrait*, 107.

century (fig. 3.4).¹⁴⁰ According to Venn, the portrait was donated/commissioned during Caius's lifetime (1510-1573).¹⁴¹ The half-length portrait depicts Caius in a black, scholarly gown worn over a black doublet; a small white ruff is just visible beneath his beard.¹⁴² The soberness of the costume highlights two gold chains, which hang from his neck. His hands rest on a green cloth-covered table. In his right hand he grasps a red carnation and in his left a pair of gloves. Three rings, including a signet ring with a death's head, are depicted on his right hand.¹⁴³ Caius's coat of arms appears in the upper left hand corner, and in the right, verses in Latin. The frame of the portrait in Venn's description carries the inscription "Aetatis suae 53, An^o Dni, 1563."¹⁴⁴ The death's head ring was worn as a reminder of mortality, in the well established tradition of the *memento mori*.¹⁴⁵ Like Frankland, Caius displays his piety while at the same time reminding the viewers of their own mortality. According to Cooper's research, scholars wear black to emphasize their sober judgment.¹⁴⁶ If Frankland's portrait was commissioned specifically for Gonville and Caius College (it is evident from her will, written before she died, that

¹⁴⁰ Venn, *Biographical History of Gonville and Caius College*, 298-300.

¹⁴¹ Venn believes that this portrait was donated/commissioned during Caius's lifetime as it was not in his will. The earliest reference to a painting of Dr. Caius, however, does not show up until 1636 "For repaying Dr Caius picture." Venn, *Biographical History of Gonville and Caius College*, 299.

¹⁴² Although from Venn's photogravure, it is difficult to tell the color, numerous painted copies of the painting all depict the sitter wearing all black. One copy, painted 1540-1559, is at Ancient House, Museum of Thetford Life, Norfolk, England.

¹⁴³ Venn, *Biographical History of Gonville and Caius College*, 294 and 298-299.

¹⁴⁴ However, Venn included a comment by Lionel Cust, who said that the frame was not contemporary with the painting as cited in Venn, *Biographical History of Gonville and Caius College*, 298.

¹⁴⁵ Cooper, *Citizen Portrait*, 84-5. Furthermore, the watch that Frankland carries in her portrait is also a *memento mori* symbol. See also Cooper's chapter "'Frail Flesh, as in a Glass': The Portrait as an Immortal Presence in Early Modern England and Wales," in *Fashioning Identities in Renaissance Art* ed. Mary Rogers 197-212 (Aldershot, 2000).

¹⁴⁶ See Cooper, *Citizen Portrait*, 125-170.

she knew she was going to give money and portraits of herself to the colleges), then Frankland's sober costume in the portrait could be an intentional reference to the portraits of males in civic institutions. Regardless, Frankland's costume still connotes a sober condition, similar, if not unrelated to Caius's sober costume.

Venn listed fifty-seven portraits in his catalogue of paintings at Gonville and Caius College in 1897. Of the fifty-seven portraits, only one other (besides those of Caius, Frankland, and Frankland's parents) could have even been painted prior to 1600.¹⁴⁷ Furthermore, in 1897, the portraits of Caius, Robert and Joanna Trappes, and Joyce Frankland were all displayed together in the Combination Room.¹⁴⁸ It is unknown where they were placed originally c.1587, but if they were placed together (and they likely were), students and scholars at the college would have seen the portraits of Robert and Joanna Trappes, Dr. John Caius, and Joyce Frankland as they all hung in the college. As an ensemble, their images would have emphasized the civic importance of sobriety in costume. While neither Robert nor Joanna Trappes meet the viewer's eyes, Frankland and Caius look directly out. They interact with the viewer, challenging him both to remember and emulate their deeds. In this, Frankland takes on a role more traditionally reserved for a male. Cooper explained, "through her birth, the judicious use of worldly riches and the failure of the male line as a consequence of her son's death, she is shown as an honorary gentleman."¹⁴⁹ However, Alexander Nowell's anecdote suggests Frankland's yearning to be a mother herself. The sober costume allows her to both emulate masculine traits and

¹⁴⁷ Thomas Legge was Master from 1573-1607. All other portraits with dates are after 1600. Unfortunately, Venn does not describe his dress in detail but does say he is featured in a black cap. Venn, *Biographical History of Gonville and Caius College*, 291.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 294-5.

¹⁴⁹ Cooper, *Citizen Portrait*, 107.

express her status as a widow. As a widow, Frankland's primary focus shifted from her husband to her children (i.e. her scholars). She becomes a "mother of learning."¹⁵⁰

Although it is unknown whether Frankland's portrait was commissioned specifically for Gonville and Caius College, Frankland's bequest of the portrait to the college signifies that it was specifically chosen and therefore considered appropriate.

A portrait of Margaret Craythorne, who bequeathed money to the Cutler's Company in London, further emphasizes the benefactress's role as matron of an institution. Margaret Craythorne was the widow of John Craythorne, who served as master of the Cutler's Company, a livery company, in 1559 (fig. 3.5).¹⁵¹ Upon his death in 1568, he left her the life interest of an inn on Fleet Street called "le bell Savage." However, Margaret Craythorne gave up the interest soon after her husband's death, bequeathing it to the Company while she was still alive.¹⁵² The circumstances for the commissioning of the portrait are unknown. Based on the costume, Cooper dates the portrait to c.1580-90.¹⁵³ The three-quarter-length portrait features Craythorne in an all black dress. The exact details of the dress are hard to make out from reproductions; however, there is little added decoration to the costume. Craythorne is shown standing with right hand gently placed over her left. Her marriage rings are clearly shown on the

¹⁵⁰ *Elizabeth I and Her People*, ed. Tarnya Cooper, 150.

¹⁵¹ Charles, Welch, *History of the Cutlers' Company: and of the Minor Cutlery Crafts*, vol. 1, *From the Early Times to the Year 1500* (London: Blades, East & Blades, 1916), 213.

¹⁵² Charles Welch, *History of the Cutlers' Company: and of the Minor Cutlery Crafts*, vol. 2 (London: Blades, East & Blades, 1916), 153.

¹⁵³ This is in contradiction to Tittler who believed that the portrait was done in 1569 (as does Welch) and given to the institution at that time. See Tittler, *Face of the City*, 174 and Welch, *History of the Cutlers' Company*, vol. 2, 153. Cooper cited a charge in the Company's records of the year of Margaret's death for the purchase of a painting. However, it is impossible to know if Margaret's portrait was the painting listed. Cooper, *Citizen Portrait*, 63.

third finger of the right hand.¹⁵⁴ She wears another ring on the first finger of her right hand and the thumb of her left. She wears a tall hat over a white coif. Craythorne is shown in a medium sized ruff, which was the prevalent shape of the later sixteenth century. Her square cut bodice reveals a gauzy white partlet and gold decoration is depicted on her conservative white cuffs. According to Cooper the portrait originally hung in the parlor/meeting hall of the Company.¹⁵⁵ By 1839, Thomas Allen, describing the Cutler's Hall, wrote that there were multiple copies of the portrait of Craythorne: above the master's chair in the hall, over the mantle-piece in the courtroom, and one in the lobby.¹⁵⁶ Today, a portrait of Craythorne hangs in the Court Room.¹⁵⁷

Craythorne's portrait originally featured an inscription that read, "Wife of John Craythorne." This is perhaps an indication of the commission; as Cooper suggested, the painting might have been commissioned, or at least purchased by the institution for whom the name of the former master of the company would have resonated.¹⁵⁸ Furthermore, Craythorne's marriage rings are prominently displayed in the portrait. Although the inscription and the prominence of the rings situate Craythorne in a patriarchal society, the emphasis of Craythorne as a wife also implies domesticity and Craythorne's maternal qualities. Although she did not have children of her own, the cutler's became her children through her benefaction. The portrait has suffered

¹⁵⁴ Mikhaila and Davies, *The Tudor Tailor*, 31.

¹⁵⁵ Cooper, *Citizen Portrait*, 63.

¹⁵⁶ Thomas Allen, *The History and Antiquities of London, Westminster, Southwark, and Parts Adjacent*, vol. 3 (London: Cowie and Strange, 1828), np.

¹⁵⁷ According to the company's website. See "Cutlers' Hall," The Worshipful Company of Cutlers, accessed July 19, 2014, <http://www.cutlerslondon.co.uk/hall/>.

¹⁵⁸ Furthermore, although there is no documentary evidence, the inscription could have been a later addition to the portrait. It is impossible to tell.

significantly over the years.¹⁵⁹ Nevertheless, the several restorations and copies made of the portrait underscore the institution's valuing of the portrait. Furthermore, Cooper cited that the importance of the piece was emphasized by the addition of a silk curtain for the painting.¹⁶⁰ According to Tittler, Craythorne's portrait can be seen as an example of a portrait displayed so that the sitter can be remembered for her charitable act.¹⁶¹ When members look upon the portrait they might be inspired to do as she had done. Cooper, however, furthers the reading of the portrait, "Craythorne's likeness was the only portrait hanging in their parlor at that date, and it must have presided over the all-male company meetings, perhaps viewed as a pictorial watchful mother protecting the company investments."¹⁶² Here again, as with the analysis in Frankland's portrait, the term mother is used; although neither of these women had surviving children, their beneficiaries became their children. The sober costume emphasizes the women's role in society. Without a husband, women turned to their children in order to justify their more powerful positions as head of the family.

However, a certain element of performance could also be expected with portraits of benefactors. According to Arthur Preston, Master of Christ's Hospital, Abingdon in 1929, Maud Tesdale's portrait was intended to be set up in St. Helen's Church over a

¹⁵⁹ The present state of the portrait is restored. The two side panels of the portrait have been replaced, evident by the description, which has been cut off. See Cooper, *Citizen Portrait*, 63.

¹⁶⁰ The Cutlers' paid eleven shillings for a piece of silk with gold fringes. Welch, *History of the Cutlers' Company*, vol. 2, 125, as cited in Cooper, *Citizen Portrait*, 63.

¹⁶¹ Tittler, *Face of the City*, 137.

¹⁶² Cooper, *Citizen Portrait*, 63.

table which housed bread to be given weekly to poor widows (fig. 3.6).¹⁶³ Although Preston's sources are not clear, the fact that the portrait was thought to have served in such a way displays the power of the portrait as simulacrum and suggests a dimension of ritual performance. Poor widows were supposed to physically look up at Tesdale's portrait as they received their weekly bread and remember who gave it to them; Tesdale was their savior. According to Ian Archer, Peter Simmons, a mercer and benefactor, dictated in 1586 his will that loaves of bread were to be placed on a table beneath a picture of himself praying.¹⁶⁴ "Simmonds" Archer argued, "may have been unusually attentive to the details of the ritual performance, but in practice many other donors were probably ritually incorporated in the distribution of their benefactions" either through an image or a verbal intercession.¹⁶⁵

Tesdale's portrait, however, does not depict her in prayer, but rather sitting. She looks directly out at the viewer. Her gown is black, and black or dark colored ribbons are shown on the front of her bodice. There is also a decorated girdle of a dark material, and black lace under her ruff. Her detailed lace cuffs are typical of the early seventeenth century. Her hood is in the style of a bongrace. An inscription on the portrait identifies the sitter as "MAWD TEASDALE," while another inscription in a different hand records the date as 1612, and her age as 67.¹⁶⁶ Although portraits of benefactresses were created

¹⁶³ Arthur Preston, *Christ's Hospital, Abingdon. The Almshouses, the Hall and the Portraits* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1929), 47.

¹⁶⁴ Archer, "The Arts and Acts of Memorialization," 97

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 101.

¹⁶⁶ Tesdale became a widow in 1610 and died in 1616. Thus, if the inscription is contemporary with the commission, the portrait's original function was most likely not civic in nature. However, according to Preston, Maud's will requests that her portrait be set up in such a way. Thus, it is probably that Tesdale felt

or donated with the intention to instill exemplification in their viewers, these portraits certainly acted as reminders, perpetuating the memory of the benefactresses. As widows came up to the table to receive their weekly bread, they would have experienced Tesdale's portrait in a particularly vivid way.

The costumes in portraits of benefactresses are not always black. Color, especially for the urban elite, held significant importance. Red was especially important as robes of red identified civic leaders.¹⁶⁷ The color not only acted as an indication of status, but as a representation of civic unity and authority. "Just as placing the crown and the royal mantle marked the coronation of the monarch," Tittler argued, "so did the civic livery serve to transform the layman into the civic official, and thus to invoke the mystery and memory—certainly the identity—of the institution."¹⁶⁸ Clothing itself could become a civic icon. Sumptuary laws emphasized the importance and the exclusiveness of red. Moreover, in certain areas civic leaders were required to wear red as a sign of their position.¹⁶⁹ Furthermore, the wives of mayors and aldermen were also granted the privilege of wearing red.¹⁷⁰ The color was an honor and a desirable tool for self-fashioning.

that her portrait featuring her sober widow costume was appropriate for benefaction. See Preston, *Christ's Hospital, Abingdon*, 47.

¹⁶⁷ As Tittler noted, red was most common as a civic color for the urban elite in the sixteenth century and usually only worn on special occasions. Thus black can be seen as the everyday wear. Tittler, *Face of the City*, 118-119. See J. H. Baker's article, "'Doctors Wear Scarlet'" which explained that red was worn on special days, including celebrating commemorations of benefactors in *Costume* 20 (1986), 34-43.

¹⁶⁸ Tittler, *Portraits, Painters and Publics*, 150 and Tittler, *Face of the City*, 120. Red was also worn by scholars.

¹⁶⁹ Tittler, *Face of the City*, 122.

¹⁷⁰ "Though mayors' wives bore no particular official responsibilities beyond partaking in the occasional civic ceremony, their portraits sometimes signaled their status as 'mayoress' by exhibiting variations on the theme of the (usually) red mayoral robe that signaled their husbands' status. Some towns, including Bristol,

Portraits of two benefactresses, Mary Ramsay and Margaret Dane, portray the women in a red costume.¹⁷¹ Both paintings are posthumous representations of their sitters. Significantly, Mary Ramsay was also a prominent member of London society. Her husband was Lord Mayor of London in 1577 and served as president of Christ's Hospital from 1582 to 1590. Mary Ramsey was active during her husband's lifetime, but also performed charitable works after his death. In her own will she bequeathed much of her money to Christ's Hospital as well as other small institutions and towns. Tittler believed that Ramsey's portrait was painted shortly after her death (c.1601), and was commissioned by the hospital itself.

The three-quarter-length portrait presents Mary Ramsay standing, clothed in a red satin gown, which is lined with brown fur (fig. 3.7). The sleeves are turned up to reveal the black dress she is wearing underneath, which is also visible at the upper chest and the opening of the skirt. For adornment, a small gold hoop earring is shown in her left ear and a jeweled pomander hangs from her girdle of gold chain. She wears a fashionable white lace ruff and small delicate lace cuffs. Her hood is black and wired to create a slight peak above her forehead. Ramsay stands with her right hand on a piece of paper while her left hand is raised, forefinger pointing up. According to Tittler, "This gesture attested to her commitment to learning, and her benefaction towards the end: striking

Salisbury, and Southampton, actually required mayors' wives as well as mayors to wear red gowns for the duration of their spouse's term in office." Tittler, *Portraits, Painters and Publics*, 150-151.

¹⁷¹ The other two from Tittler's list are Lady Devorguilla and Joan Tuckfield. Lady Devorguilla's portrait, which appeared c.1605, is a posthumous portrait as the benefactress lived in 13th century Scotland. Joan Tuckfield, a more contemporary figure, most likely sat for her portrait in c.1560. By this time, Joan was a widow but she is not shown in traditional widow costume, but in the red of her husband's status as mayor of Exeter. Tittler, *Portraits, Painters and Publics*, 147-151. Tittler believed that the portrait was acquired some time after the original commission (1573), thus the portrait's original intent may not have been civic. See Tittler, *Face of the City*, Appendix A.

contemporary affirmations of a woman's altruistic and intellectual potential."¹⁷² By the time of the portrait, Ramsay was a widow continuing her husband's work. She is shown as a powerful benefactress, not only inspiring citizens to emulate her work, but also instilling her wisdom. Her red, fur-lined costume is a "spousal version"¹⁷³ of the mayoral robes her husband would have worn. She thus embodies her husband's power, authority, and adeptness as a donor.

Red was a civic color for the urban elite. Even as the red of her dress drew attention to Ramsay's status, the red also conformed to the larger idea of civic authority. Tittler argued that portraits commissioned by institutions are a "purer form" of civic portrait, and the images "would almost always display the official raiment."¹⁷⁴ This is evident in another posthumous portrait of Margaret Dane. Upon her death in c.1579, Dane left a substantial portion of her fortune to the Ironmongers, a livery company (her late husband had served as Master in 1570). In 1851, John Nicholl recorded a painting of Dane by William Cocke, commissioned by the Ironmongers in 1640. He described the painting's subject, "[h]abited in a scarlet robe, black cap and ruff, with jewels round her neck, and kneeling before a desk, on which is placed a book."¹⁷⁵ Nicholl's catalogue does not record a portrait of Dane's husband. However, like Mary Ramsay's costume, Dane's red robes emulate the robes her husband would have worn when he served as an alderman and sheriff of London in 1569. The power of red is aptly summarized by John

¹⁷² Tittler, "Thomas Heywood," 44.

¹⁷³ Tittler, *Face of the City*, 151.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 121.

¹⁷⁵ Unfortunately, there are no readily available reproductions of Dane, and so this thesis must rely on Nicholl's observations. John Nicholl, *Some Account of the Worshipful Company of Ironmongers* (London, 1866), 465.

Earle, a London writer, who saw the power of the robes of the London Aldermen in 1628:

“He is Venerable in his gowne ... wherewith he setts not forth so much his owne, as the face of a City ... His Scarlet gowne is a Monument, and lasts from generation to generation.”¹⁷⁶

However, not all institutions chose to portray wives of mayors in a red costume. An unusual double portrait of the benefactors John and Joan Cooke belongs to the Gloucester City Museum (fig. 3.8). John Cooke served in many positions of civic leadership. Most notably he served four times as mayor of Gloucester between 1501 and 1518.¹⁷⁷ Upon his death in 1528, he left several charitable bequests, naming his wife as executrix of his will to carry out his bequests. Joan Cooke, who died in 1544, left many charitable donations and endowments in her will as well. However, she is most celebrated for the foundation of the Crypt School, an institution that was part of John Cooke’s bequest.

The three-quarter-length double portrait, now at the Gloucester Folk Museum, depicts John Cooke with a distant gaze standing to the left of his wife. His costume is typical of that of a high-ranking civil servant. He is shown in a dark colored, presumably black doublet augmented with small ruffs at the cuff and a larger ruff at his neck. Over this, he wears a red mayoral robe trimmed with light brown fur. Cooke is not only depicted with his wife, but is shown physically connected with her in the portrait. His right hand grasps his wife’s left hand and his left arm encircles his wife’s torso, with his

¹⁷⁶ John Earle, *Microcosmographic, or a Peece of the World Discovered* (STC 7439, 1622) (unpaginated), part 5. As cited in Tittler, *Face of the City*, 120.

¹⁷⁷ Robert Tittler, *Townpeople and Nation: English Urban Experiences 1540-1640* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 86.

left hand just visibly resting on his wife's waist. Joan Cooke is not shown in mayoral red, but is represented by the artists in a contrasting color. The color of Joan Cooke's gown is dark and is difficult to ascertain from photo-reproductions. Tittler, who has worked with the painting, suggested that her gown was originally a dark maroon.¹⁷⁸ Her open ruff is shown tied together with two delicate white ties. An embroidered yellow forepart is shown underneath the gown along with matching sleeves that end in small white-ruffed cuffs at her wrists. She wears a three-strand necklace of dark colored beads around her neck. Her black hood is in the style of a bongrace. In her left hand she grasps a pair of gloves. She is positioned more frontally than her husband and she gazes directly at the viewer.

The size of the white ruff shown around their neck, and other aspects of the style of Joan Cooke's costume date to the later half of the sixteenth century, which corresponds to the dating of the painting to c.1597-1600.¹⁷⁹ This double portrait is clearly a posthumous representation as the sitters died long before their costumes were fashionable.¹⁸⁰

The portrait features two inscriptions believed to be contemporaneous with the painting. A smaller inscription in the upper left hand corner identifies John Cooke, "MA[ster] IOHN COOKE, MAIOR OF THE CITTE OF GLOUCESTER 4 TIMES." A lengthier inscription appears at the bottom:

Though death hath rested these life mates
Their memory survives

¹⁷⁸ Tittler, *Townspeople and Nation*, 81.

¹⁷⁹ Tittler, "Thomas Heywood," 40.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 51, n. 32.

Esteemed myrrors may they be
For Majestrats and wives
The School of Crist ye Bartholomews
The Cawseway in ye West
May wittnes wch ye pious minde
This Worthy man possest.
This virtuous dame perform'd ye taske
Her husband did intend
And after him in single life
Lived famous to her end
Their bountye & beneficence
On earth remains allways
Let present past and future time
Still Celebrate yr praise.

Tittler's formal analysis of Joan Cooke argued that she appears in an active and powerful position; she is the "dominant figure."¹⁸¹ She leads her husband by appearing in front of him and having her hand under his. Furthermore, gloves are extremely rare in civic portraits of women.¹⁸² The gloves she carries in her hands instead are symbolic of gloves her husband would have been given when he entered the freemanry. However, it she who now carries the gloves and in so doing "she carries forth his freeman's responsibilities and his civic benefactions."¹⁸³ Her status as executrix of her husband's will is further emphasized by her active status in the portrait.

However, although Joan Cooke may be shown in an active role according to Tittler's analysis, her costume presents her less as a civic authority and more as a wealthy citizen's wife. Although it is clear that she is being commemorated in the portrait, she is commemorated as the dutiful wife, emphasized by her costume. The goal of this portrait

¹⁸¹ Tittler, "Thomas Heywood," 41.

¹⁸² Tittler, *Portraits, Painters, and Publics*, 131-133.

¹⁸³ Tittler, *Townspeople and Nation*, 92. Robert Tittler, who has completed extensive research on portraits of the Elizabethan urban elite, argued that gloves are representative of power, especially when depicted in the portraits of the urban elite rather than the courtly nobility. For more information, see Tittler, *Face of the City*, 129-134.

would have been to inspire people to act in a similar way. In other words, John was the charitable ideal for men, whereas the feminine ideal was Joan the dutiful wife, or as the inscription states, “Esteemed myrrors may they be For Majestrats and wives.” Joan Cooke is to be a mirror for wives, a role that is emphasized by her costume. Although she did act on her own in her widowhood, widowhood here is not emphasized.

Tittler does consider the importance of John Cooke’s robes, but little consideration is taken for the representation of Joan Cooke. “These were elements of the borough ‘livery,’ reflecting the desired public image of civic rectitude and sobriety rather than any display of personal wealth and fame.”¹⁸⁴ That Joan Cooke is not depicted as an outright widow in a sober costume is important for the reading of her iconography. The maroon may have faintly echoed the red used in civic livery, but it is much more muted in comparison to her husband’s red.

Although Joan Cooke was active in charitable and civic programs after her husband’s death, she is still remembered through him. Depicted in a double portrait, Joan cannot be remembered without the memory of her husband. The inscription furthermore states that it was John Cooke who had a pious mind, who thought of the charitable activities, “The Cawseway in ye West/ May wittnes wch ye pious minde/ This Worthy man possest.” Joan Cooke merely completed the tasks that her husband did not finish before his death, “This virtuous dame perfrom’d ye taske/ Her husband did intend.” In carrying out his will, Joan remains faithful to her husband.¹⁸⁵ Although she takes on a more active role in the portrait, her active role is cemented to the completion of her

¹⁸⁴ Tittler, *Townspeople and Nation*, 90.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 92.

husband's desires. She fulfills his wishes, he is the civil servant and in this portrait she appears as her husband's vessel. Joan Cooke, however, is not portrayed as a civil servant like her husband, but as a wealthy woman of the urban elite.

The double portrait belongs to a group of 12 portraits of benefactors of the city of Gloucester, which have remained together ever since. They were most likely commissioned or purchased between 1597-1627.¹⁸⁶ Besides Joan Cooke, only two other women are portrayed amongst the benefactors, Isabel Wetherstone and Joan Goldston. Like most of the information on the twelve benefactors, the information surrounding the women and their portraits is limited. However, based on the portraits themselves some conclusions can be made. Both women appear alone and are featured in a dark, presumably black, costume. There is no additional color (excluding white) and neither woman is featured with any sort of jewelry. Furthermore, neither Isabel nor Joan Goldston's husbands are featured in the surviving corpus, suggesting that neither of these portraits was a pendant to her husband's portrait.

It is unknown exactly when Isabel Wetherstone died and Frith tentatively gives her birth year as 1555.¹⁸⁷ Her last husband, Thomas Wetherstone, is known to have died in 1597, so we can assume that Isabel died sometime after that date since he left provisions for her in his will. In her own will she bequeathed multiple donations to the poor of Gloucester, securing her place among the remembered benefactors of the city. The three-quarter-length portrait of Isabel Wetherstone depicts her in a black gown (fig. 3.9). Though difficult to make out, her costume does seem to have slight variations in the

¹⁸⁶ Tittler, *Townspeople and Nation*, 89. See also Brian Frith, *Twelve Portraits of Gloucester Benefactors* (Gloucester, 1972).

¹⁸⁷ We know that she outlived her husband because he left provisions for her in his will. Frith, *Twelve Portraits of Gloucester Benefactors*, 18.

dark color, suggesting muted decoration. A small padded roll can be seen on her shoulder. Like Joan Cooke, she has an open ruff and delicate lace cuffs. Her hood is in the style of a bonnet. Her hands are presented overlaying each other over her stomach. She is presented as a model of a pious and sober benefactress much like Joyce Frankland and Margaret Craythorne.

Notably, although the dates and exact circumstances of Wetherstone's portrait have yet to be definitively established, there is a marked difference in costume between Isabel Wetherstone and Joan Cooke. When appearing by her husband's side, Joan is adorned in a decorated costume, however Isabel is presented alone and in a sober dress. This further suggests that by appearing in a decorated costume, Joan is presented less as a solitary figure who fully realized her husband's intention of starting a school, than as a vessel through which her husband could continue his good deeds. The portrait of Joan Cooke would have hung by the other portraits of benefactresses who donned costumes that appeared more sober in contrast. Moreover, Joan Cooke's corporeal connection to her husband takes away some of her own identity by physically fusing her body to that of her husband. Though Joan Cooke does not appear weak and passive, her portrait nevertheless reminds the viewer of her husband and the charitable acts they accomplished together while downplaying her role as a powerful benefactress.

While some portraits were specifically commissioned in a philanthropic context, other portraits, the original intention of which was non-civic or domestic, could be repurposed for civic use.¹⁸⁸ One of these, a portrait of Elizabeth Pope was acquired by

¹⁸⁸ See also Frances Sidney's portrait for Sidney Sussex College. Tittler, *Face of the City*, Appendix A.

Trinity College in the early 1600's (fig. 3.10).¹⁸⁹ The portrait however dates to c.1554 and was painted during her life (d.1593). Sir Thomas Pope was a prominent member of London society. His greatest achievement was the foundation of Trinity College, Oxford in 1555. Pope died in 1559 and his wife Elizabeth took interest in the college, "styling herself foundress," and securing the college's financial position.¹⁹⁰ Indeed, even after she remarried, she and her new husband, Sir Hugh Paulet, continued to support the college.

The three-quarter-length portrait features Elizabeth Pope in mid-sixteenth century fashion. Her black gown is high-necked, but left open at the neck forming a V-shape. The opening also reveals an embroidered blackwork smock. The gown has wide hanging sleeves that reveal wide red under sleeves with rich embroidered blackwork details. The forepart is also a rich red. For the mid-sixteenth century, Pope's costume is extensively and richly decorated, representing her elite status. Pearls cover her costume: the decorative band on her red and black hood is lined with two strings, and a multi string necklace hangs from her neck. Furthermore, the jeweled brooch on her chest is studded with pearls, three strands are used as a girdle and pomander, and pearls also accent her sleeves. Furthermore, Pope wears two gold bracelets around each wrist and a ring on her finger.

If Poole is correct in dating the portrait to c. 1554, Elizabeth Pope would not have been a widow. Therefore, this portrait, though acquired in 1612/13, celebrates her as a

¹⁸⁹ Ibid. Tittler cited that the institution received/purchased the painting in 1600. However, according to Mrs. Reginald Lane Poole, this portrait was purchased in 1612/13 and possibly intended to be a companion picture to a portrait of her husband previously acquired by the institution. See R. L. Poole, *Catalogue of Portraits in the Possession of the University, Colleges, City, and County of Oxford*, vol. III (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1926), 122.

¹⁹⁰ Clare Hopkins, "Pope, Sir Thomas (c.1507-1559)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), accessed on 22 Sept., 2014.
<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/22533>.

benefactress and as the wife of Thomas Pope. However, although they both appear in the dress of a wealthy wife, Elizabeth Pope's portrait differs from Joan Cooke because Pope's portrait was purchased and not commissioned by the institution itself.¹⁹¹ Indeed, because the portrait was not originally intended to be civic in nature, the costume connotes a different status from the costumes previously examined, such as those of Joyce Frankland and Margaret Craythorne. Certainly, the added decoration on Pope's costume only bolsters her status as object of her husband, especially when placed beside a portrait of him. Poole listed the other portraits of Thomas, all of which feature him in a black, sober costume.¹⁹² The elaborate dress of this domestic portrait throws the sober dress of the philanthropist into higher relief.

The Reformation silenced the eschatological function of charity, yet charity still existed. "Protestant reformers sought to remove their association with the Catholic economy of good-works salvation by repeatedly stressing that the charities of Londoners were the 'fruits of faith', manifestations of God's glory."¹⁹³ The portraits were created not only for self-fashioning purposes, but also to be presented as models for their fellow citizens.¹⁹⁴ Furthermore, civic portraiture not only served self-fashioning purposes for the benefactor/ress, but for the institution as well. Indeed, as Archer argued, "Whatever the rhetoric of charitable endeavor within which it was clothed, it is unquestionable that the memorialization of benefactors also served to legitimate the unequal structures of power

¹⁹¹ Poole believes that Trinity College paid £2 in 1612-1613 as a companion to Sir Thomas Pope's portrait commissioned by the college in 1596, Poole, *Catalogue of Portraits*, vol. III, 118 and 127.

¹⁹² Most notable are no. I and II, the other portraits listed seem to merely be copies of these two portraits. Poole, *Catalogue of Portraits*, vol. III, 118.

¹⁹³ Archer, "The Arts and Acts of Memorialization," 109.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 109.

within London's companies and parishes."¹⁹⁵ Civic portraits further separated the divide between those that give and those that receive. Certainly, Maud Tesdale's bequest that her portrait be displayed when poor widows came to receive the bread she had donated emphasizes Archer's point.

Memory and memorialization held great significance with the citizens of the Elizabethan era. Clothing held the power to evoke memory. Furthermore, as Tittler argued, civic portraits "served to invoke memories to fit a civic agenda."¹⁹⁶ Thus institutions had to be careful and selective in their choosing of portraits. Joyce Frankland's sober costume emphasizes a multifaceted reading of the portrait within the restricted vocabulary of the university setting and civic portraiture standards. Frankland's portrait must have been seen as appropriate, especially in light of the several copies made after the original (likewise Margaret Craythorne's portrait was copied and emulated). Although the power of the sober costume of the benefactresses relied upon widowhood, its particular meaning differs from the dynastic widow costume of the previous chapter. It is the widow who acted, not her husband and it is the widow herself who desired and was remembered because of her own deeds.

¹⁹⁵ Archer, "The Arts and Acts of Memorialization," 112.

¹⁹⁶ Tittler, *Face of the City*, 138.

CHAPTER IV

QUEEN ELIZABETH I

This is true, so far as I know, of no other queen in English history, however beautiful, elegant, or gifted: Elizabeth alone is inseparable from her wardrobe and *vice versa*.¹⁹⁷

Queen Elizabeth I's gowns were sartorial representations of empire: to see Elizabeth was to see England. "The figure of the Queen," Jane Ashelford argued, "'glittering with the glory of majesty and adorned with jewelry and precious gems', and those of her equally resplendent courtiers had become a symbol of England's national unity and international success."¹⁹⁸ Elizabeth's extravagant clothing reflected England's wealth and power.¹⁹⁹ Elizabeth's costumes are crucial aspects of her portraiture; they further establish her identity as queen and monarch. Details of Elizabeth's portraits, including the costumes portrayed are particularly important because the government closely monitored their production.²⁰⁰ In an investigation of a corpus of one hundred and eighteen portraits of Queen Elizabeth I, one hundred and seventeen depict the queen in a highly decorated costume.²⁰¹ The remaining portrait is the Siena Sieve portrait (c.1583) and is the only painting that depicts the queen in a sober costume (fig. 4.1). Scholarship

¹⁹⁷ Francis Kelley, "Queen Elizabeth and Her Dresses," *Connoisseur* 113 (June 1944): 71.

¹⁹⁸ *The Diary of Baron Waldstein. A Traveller in Elizabethan England*, trans. G. W. Groos (London: Thames and Husdon, 1981), 77. As cited in Jane Ashelford, *The Art of Dress*, 36.

¹⁹⁹ A discussion on whether or not the clothes in Elizabeth's portrait are real or not is an important topic, however, this chapter will assume that the clothes depicted are fairly realistic. For more discussion see Janet Arnold, *Elizabeth's Wardrobe Unlock'd*. However, the topic of this chapter does not focus on if Elizabeth actually wore these costumes, but why she would be represented in the costume itself.

²⁰⁰ Early in her reign, the Crown destroyed all portraits not officially sanctioned by the government and new decrees limiting the portraits of the Queen were created. See Strong, *Gloriana*, 12-14.

²⁰¹ This corpus was compiled by the author from reproductions of portraits found in Roy Strong, *Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), Strong, *Gloriana*, and Arnold, *Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe Unlock'd*.

around the portrait has focused on its various attributes but has failed to fully address the importance of the sobriety of Elizabeth's costume. Costume historians have glossed over this celebrated portrait in their survey of Elizabeth's dresses and art historians have glossed over the importance of the costume in their analyses. The Queen's appearance in the sober dress however, further signifies the importance of this understudied type of costume. How can the identification of the sober costume in the Siena Sieve portrait and its significance alter the reading of the portrait? This final chapter further investigates the Siena Sieve portrait by using the costume as a lens to decipher the painting.

Elizabethan fashion evolved from the Spanish-influenced severity of Mary I's reign in the 1550's. During this time clothing of the elite tended towards somber colors. The fashion relied on brocades to add contrast and definition without the added adornments of the later Elizabethan era. The style of Mary's reign was in large part a consequence of her marriage to Philip II of Spain. It was customary for royal brides to adopt the style of their new husbands and countries, giving up their own fashion.²⁰² In 1554, after the Royal wedding, Ruy Gómez de Silva, one of Philip's companions, remarked:

The Princess of Portugal sent the Queen a fine present of dresses and coifs, and the Queen has not yet finished looking at them and rejoicing over them. I believe that if she dressed in our fashions she would not look so old and flabby.²⁰³

Mary's adoption of somber colored clothing was not only influenced by Spanish fashion, but was also due to her religious status as a Catholic.²⁰⁴ In Antonis Mor's portrait of Mary

²⁰² Aileen Ribeiro, *The Gallery of Fashion* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 30.

²⁰³ "Spain: July 1554, 26-31," in *Calendar of State Papers, Spain, Volume 13: 1554-1558*, Royall Tyler, ed., available from: British History Online, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=88577> (accessed 22 September 2014).

from 1554, the year of her wedding, the English monarch is featured in a dark brown velvet dress which opens at the skirt to reveal a richly brocaded forepart of a white and brown design (fig. 4.2). The patron of the portrait, Charles V, Philip II's father, wanted Mary to look like a royal Spanish consort, not an English regnant.²⁰⁵ The large jewel on Mary's bodice is a recognizable wedding gift from Philip II. As Woodall explained, wearing the pendant "epitomized [Mary's] privileged but subordinate status within the Habsburg family."²⁰⁶ There are three surviving full copies of the portrait, as well as numerous smaller variations, proving its popularity and use throughout the mid-sixteenth century.

When Elizabeth ascended the throne, fashion shifted. The darker, somber colors of Mary's reign were replaced with brighter hues followed by an increasing urge to decorate the entire garment.²⁰⁷ The antiquarian Frederick William Fairholt summarized Elizabeth's change in fashion:

In 1558, the lion-hearted Elizabeth ascended the throne. She dressed, of course, as her sister had dressed before her, and so did the ladies of her court; but the Queen, who could gather upwards of two thousand dresses of all nations for her wardrobe, and highly resent the conduct of an over-zealous divine for preaching against excess in apparel before her and her court in St. Paul's, was not the lady to remain clothed like her grandmother. We not only find a total change, therefore, in the female costume during her reign, but a superabundance of finery.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁴ Breward, *The Culture of Fashion*, 46. See also Joanna Woodall, "An Exemplary Consort: Antonis Mor's Portrait of Mary Tudor," *Art History* 14, no. 2 (June 1991): 192-224.

²⁰⁵ Woodall, "An Exemplary Consort," 201.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 214.

²⁰⁷ Breward, *The Culture of Fashion*, 49.

²⁰⁸ Frederick William Fairholt, *Costume in England: A History of Dress from the Earliest period Till the Close of the Eighteenth Century* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1846), 202. See also Kelley, "Queen Elizabeth and her Dresses," 1.

Elizabeth reinforced her queenly status by appearing in the most current fashion. The elite Elizabethans kept changing their fashion to be different from lower orders, while the lower orders tried to emulate the elite.²⁰⁹ Thus, appearing in outdated fashion was a sign of lesser class and could depreciate status. Indeed, some of Elizabeth's portraits were retouched later to update the costume to reflect new fashionable trends.²¹⁰ Louis Montrose explained that many Elizabethan subjects recognized the power of Elizabeth's appearance.²¹¹ The writer John Hayward complimented the Queen for "knowing right well that in pompous ceremonies a secret of government doth much consist, for that the people are naturally both taken and held with exterior shewes...The rich attired, the ornaments, the beauty of Ladyes, did add particular graces to the solemnity, and held the eyes and hearts of men dazeled betweene contentment and admiration." ²¹²

The Siena Sieve portrait, by Quentin Metsys the Younger takes its name from the sieve Elizabeth holds in her hand. Found in 1895 rolled up in the attic of the Palazzo Reale, Siena, the exact circumstances of the portrait and how it ended up in Siena still remain mysteries.²¹³ Compared to her costumes in other portraits, Elizabeth's dress in the Siena Sieve portrait is much more austere. Elizabeth's costume in the portrait clashes with the concept of the Queen's costume as the paradigm of bejeweled and extravagantly colored costumes that modern costume history has established. Although the costume of

²⁰⁹ Reynolds, *In Fine Style*, 8.

²¹⁰ See Arnold, *Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe Unlock'd*, 19-32.

²¹¹ Louis Montrose, "Elizabeth through the Looking Glass," in *The Body of the Queen: Gender and Rule in the Courtly World 1500-2000* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006), 75.

²¹² John Hayward, *Annals of the First Four Years of the Reign of Queen Elizabeth*, ed. John Bruce (1840; reprint New York, 1968), 15. As cited by Montrose, "Elizabeth through the Looking Glass," 75.

²¹³ Strong, *Gloriana*, 101.

Elizabeth in the Siena Sieve portrait is not out of fashion for the 1580's, the appearance of the Queen in such a sober gown is unusual.²¹⁴ The portrait depicts the queen in an all-black, high-necked gown. A double rope of large pearls is hung around her neck and is knotted into a loop to the right. This is visually balanced by a pendent pinned above her left breast. The pendent features a large table-cut diamond with two figures on each side reaching across to each other. A large teardrop pearl hangs from the pendent, mirrored by a teardrop pearl hanging from the queen's left ear. A jeweled, but conservative girdle defines Elizabeth's waist. A large, but delicate lace ruff lies underneath her chin, echoed by the smaller ruffs around her wrists. The white gauze wired veil encloses her, increasing the bulk of her costume. Compared to Elizabeth's other costumes in paintings, Elizabeth's costume in the Siena Sieve portrait is, in Francis Kelley's words, "one of soberest presentations of the subject."²¹⁵

Several other versions of the Sieve type exist by artists including John Bettes the Younger and George Gower. While all three Sieve portraits share a common symbol, they differ markedly in terms of costume. The Plimpton portrait (c. 1579), attributed to George Gower, is the earliest of the three (fig. 4.3).²¹⁶ Gower's portrait becomes the prototype for the rest of the Sieve portraits, including the Siena Sieve portrait. The three-

²¹⁴ Compared to Elizabeth's other full-length portraits. Not "out of style" concerning the shape and the style of the dress, however, the limited decoration is unusual for the Queen's life-size oil portraits.

²¹⁵ Kelly, "Queen Elizabeth and her Dresses," 78.

²¹⁶ The portrait was named 'Plimpton' for its previous owner who acquired the painting in the 20th century. Strong, *Portraits*, 66, no 43. This painting now resides in the Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington D.C. George Gower was appointed Elizabeth's Serjeant Painter in 1581. Although he was in charge of Elizabeth's portraits at the time (along with Elizabeth's miniature painter, Nicholas Hilliard) his main assignment as Serjeant Painter was, as Strong points out, "the maintenance of decorative painting in the royal palaces." Roy Strong, *Gloriana*, 14, 18-19. Gower was, however, a very popular portrait painter before he became Serjeant Painter and many of his paintings still exist today. He is known for flat rendering of the body and overall anti-realistic style. Erna Auerbach, "Portraits of Elizabeth I," *The Burlington Magazine*, 95, no. 693 (June 1953), 202 and Jane Ashelford, *Dress in the Age of Elizabeth I*, 9.

quarter-length Plimpton portrait features Elizabeth standing turned slightly to the left. In her left hand is the symbolic sieve, while her left hand rests on the arm of a chair, grasping a pair of gloves. Behind Elizabeth's right shoulder is a globe, while to her right is her coat of arms. There are three visible inscriptions on the portrait: 'STA[N]CHO | RIPOSO | & RIPO | SATO | AFFA | NNO' ('Weary, I rest and, having rested, still am weary'), a passage from Petrarch's *Triumph of Love* (1547), is featured below Elizabeth's coat of arms, 'A TERRA ILBEN | AL DIMORA IN SELLA' ('The good falls to the ground while the bad remains in the saddle' is on the lip of the sieve, and finally, 'TVTTO VEDO ET MO[LTO MANCHA]' ('I see all and much is lacking') is painted above the globe in the background.²¹⁷ The Plimpton portrait, Strong argued, "marks a new departure in Elizabeth's portraiture, for it combines the earliest manifestations of imperial aspirations with Petrarchan motifs in celebration of her chastity."²¹⁸ The inscriptions help to allude to the portrait's meaning, emphasizing chastity (via Petrarch), justice and virginity (via the sieve), and imperialism.

Elizabeth's gown is cut from rich red velvet. The gold embroidered guard that lines the bodice and skirt of the front closing gown is further adorned with pearls. Her creamed-colored gold embroidered satin sleeves are pinked (decoratively slashed) so as to make visible the undersleeve and her red velvet shoulder rolls are embroidered, bedecked with pearls, and puffed. A long length of pearls follows the line of the square

²¹⁷ Translations taken from Karen Hearn, ed. *Dynasties: Painting in Tudor and Jacobean England, 1530-1630* (New York: Rizzoli International Publications Inc., 1995), 85. Published in conjunction with the exhibition of the same name, shown at Tate Gallery, London. Strong translates the inscriptions, *Stanco riposo e riposato affano*: Wery rest, and rest with wo and payne, *Tutto vedo e molto mancha*: I see everything but much is missing. The remaining inscription, *A terra il ben mal dimora insella* is identically translated by both scholars. Strong, *Gloriana*, 97-98.

²¹⁸ Strong, *Gloriana*, 96.

cut bodice from her shoulders and is carefully draped and pinned to the front of the gown. Around her neck, below the short but thick neck ruff, a large jewel hangs from a thick gold necklace. Elizabeth wears a veil with gold horizontal lines that is attached to a bejeweled headpiece.

William Camden, an Elizabethan historian, noted that the sieve was one of Elizabeth's favorite emblems.²¹⁹ It identified the Virgin Queen with Petrarch's Roman Vestal Virgin Tuccia, who proved her purity by carrying water from the Tiber in a sieve. Contemporary literature, including the poems of John Lyly, also celebrated Elizabeth as Tuccia.²²⁰ However, the sieve not only symbolized chastity but it also associated Elizabeth with discernment.²²¹ The motto located on the sieve, "the good falls to the earth while the bad remains in the saddle," suggests that Elizabeth, who is holding the sieve, is the one to sort the good from the bad. In Claudius Paradin's *Heroical Devises*, translated into English in 1591, the sieve is listed as an emblem for discernment:

The nature of a riddle or sive doth represent the good and honest, for everie sive devideth the good corne, and the profitable graine, from the unprofitable: so in like manner both the good and the evill, have knowledge to judge and discern betwixt the nature and propertie of things, which the wicked do not, but heape up everie thing without the riddle or sive of reason.²²²

The portrait presents Elizabeth as a judge by giving her the sieve of discernment. Thus the sieve not only represents chastity, purity, and virginity, it also represents (through the motif of discernment) justice. Such a reading has led Frances Yates and Roy Strong to

²¹⁹ Strong, *Gloriana*, 96. Camden was commissioned by King James to write Elizabeth's biography.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, 96-97.

²²¹ *Ibid.*

²²² Claudius Paradin, *The heroicall devises of M. Claudius Paradin, Whereunto are added the Lord Gabriel Symeons and others*, trans. William Kearney (London, 1591, The English Book Emblem Project).

recognized parallels to the figure of Astraea, the virgin goddess of justice. Furthermore, Strong believed that the motto on the globe and the globe itself “elaborate the imperial aspect of Elizabeth as a Vestal Virgin.”²²³ Therefore, as Yates argued, Elizabeth fashions herself as an Astraean “imperial virgin.”²²⁴

A later Sieve portrait (c.1585-90) by John Bettes the Younger and his workshop is similar in composition to the Plimpton portrait, only it is mirrored (fig. 4.4). The sieve is now featured in Elizabeth’s right hand, while her left is placed on the arm of a chair, again grasping a pair of gloves. Unlike the Plimpton portrait, Bettes’s portrait does not contain a globe. Elizabeth’s status as an imperial virgin is now expressed entirely through the device of the sieve.

The costume in Bettes’s portrait features the Queen in a black cloth, high-necked dress. Significantly, unlike the austere black gown in the earlier Siena Sieve portrait, this gown is richly ornamented. A thick gold guard lines both sides of the front closing gown. Its double shoulder rolls are puffed with white silk but are dwarfed by her voluminous sleeves embroidered with colorful floral imagery and covered with a transparent gauzy material. Three, or possibly four strands of large round pearls hang in consecutively larger loops around the Queen’s neck. Her girdle is decorated with alternating jewels set in gold and pearls. Bettes’s workshop production of the portrait is a product of copying other artists by using tracings and by reusing props such as Elizabeth’s dress.²²⁵ With only slight variations, this dress appears in at least five portraits of the Queen by the same

²²³ Strong, *Gloriana*, 98.

²²⁴ Frances Yates, *Astraea: The Imperial Theme in the Sixteenth Century* (Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975), 88-120.

²²⁵ See Strong, *Gloriana*, 117-119.

workshop. The costume is repeated but different props like fans, and gloves are inserted. The repetition of the costume emphasizes its approval as an appropriate costume for the Queen. Jones and Stallybrass pointed out that, “while the modern connoisseur searches the faces for a revealing feature or for the identity of the sitter, the pictures themselves give a minutely detailed portrayal of the material constitution of the subject: a subject composed through textiles and jewels, fashioned by clothes.”²²⁶ In other words, clothes were more distinct than the face of the sitter. Indeed, the minutely detailed description of each gem and pearl on Elizabeth’s costume is evidence of how important the depictions of the costume and adornments were for the Elizabethan audience.

Because of its iconographic complexity, the ‘Siena’ portrait is the most famous of the Sieve portraits (fig. 4.1). The life-sized, three-quarter-length portrait features the queen standing slightly to the right. The symbolic sieve is featured in her left hand. She rests her right arm on the base of a tall column, which depicts the story of Dido and Aeneas from the *Aeneid* in nine gold medallions. Behind the Queen’s left arm is a globe and further behind that is an arcade filled with courtiers and attendants. The portrait is visually similar to Gower’s composition, but Metsys enhances the imperial theme through the addition of a column. The portrait is inscribed in a similar manner as the Plimpton portrait, containing the same three mottos. However, the color and decoration of Elizabeth’s gown in the Plimpton portrait sharply contrasts with the sober costume featured in the Siena Sieve portrait. While scholars have celebrated the Plimpton portrait as the first of the sieve portraits and have recognized the other sieve portraits as important in the fashioning of the queen, little attention has been given to the significant difference

²²⁶ Jones and Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory*, 35.

in color and/or decoration between the costumes in the other sieve portraits and the sober, black costume in the Siena Sieve portrait.

Black was an important color for the Queen. In 1564, Elizabeth told the Spanish Ambassador, Don Diego Guzman de Silva, that black and white were “her colors.”²²⁷ Her courtiers often dressed in black and white to compliment the Queen. One example of the latter appears in a miniature by Nicholas Hilliard, entitled *Young Man among Roses* (1585-95) (fig. 4.5). The amorous image portrays a young man clad in white and black standing outdoors amongst a bush of white eglantine roses that symbolize Elizabeth.²²⁸ He leans against a tree with his right hand dreamily placed over his heart. The man is wearing fashionable court clothing of the 1580’s including a peascod doublet in a black and white pattern. Large gold buttons line the front of his doublet, curving inward with the peascod shape. A black cloak is casually hung over his left shoulder and a large white ruff frames his head of brown curly hair. The young man has been identified as Robert Devereux, the Earl of Essex and one of Elizabeth’s favorites.²²⁹ At the time of the portrait, Essex was at the height of royal favor. By appearing entwined and dressed in the symbols of Elizabeth, Essex expressed his devotion and love for the Queen.²³⁰ Essex was not the only courtier to appear in the Queen’s colors in a portrait. Walter Raleigh also

²²⁷ Jane A. Lawson gives the full quote in de Silva’s commentary, “Then there was a mask of certain gentleman who entered dressed in black and white, which the Queen told me were her colors.” *Calendar of State Papers, Spanish*, vol. 1 (London, 1862-1919), 368. As cited in Lawson, “Rainbow for a Reign: The Colors of a Queen’s Wardrobe,” *Costume*, 41 (2007), 26. See also Arnold (1988), 1.

²²⁸ Roy Strong, “Faces of a Favorite: Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex, and the Uses of Portraiture,” *The British Art Journal* 5, no. 2 (Autumn 2004): 80-90.

²²⁹ Roy Strong, *The Cult of Elizabeth: Elizabeth Portraiture and Pageantry* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), 61.

²³⁰ For a more complete discussion of this portrait see Strong, *The Cult of Elizabeth*, 56-83.

appears in multiple portraits dressed in black and white. Black as a heraldic color functioned differently from the black of widow's clothing. The heraldic black, worn by Elizabeth's courtiers, was not about conveying austerity and sobriety but instead sought to compliment the Queen. According to the costume historian Linthicum, in drama "the lover wore the colors of his mistress, and by means of the language of colors could carry on a silent conversations or flirtation with her."²³¹ The power of Essex's costume depended on and revolved around the Queen. Elizabeth's champions wore the two colors during tilts and masques. According to a popular Elizabethan heraldry book by Gerard Legh, white and black are the colors of messengers: "It is necessary that all estates should be Couriers as sure messengers for the expedition of their business whose office is to pass & repass on foot, being clad in their prince's colors parted upright as the one half white and the other black."²³² Thus, Elizabeth's favorites and champions wore colors that both honored the queen and displayed their loyalty as her faithful messengers.

However, Elizabeth was not the only English monarch to choose black and white as her colors. Edward VI also preferred black and white, while Henry VII used red and white, Henry VIII chose blue and silver or white, and Mary I (along with Philip II) chose the colors of her father, blue and silver or white.²³³ Furthermore, Jane Lawson examined Elizabeth's New Year's gift rolls, focusing on the color of fabric/gown/article of clothing given to Elizabeth by her subjects. She argued that while Elizabeth's subjects certainly wore black and white to reflect and honor the queen, Elizabeth did not solely dress in

²³¹ Linthicum, *Costume in the Drama of Shakespeare*, 25.

²³² Elizabeth was given a copy of this book *Accedens of Armoury* in 1563. Lawson, "Rainbow for a Reign," 26.

²³³ *Ibid.*, 27.

black and white and in fact wore many colors.²³⁴ It is thus an injustice to the Siena Sieve portrait to merely relegate the sober costume to Elizabeth's preference in color, especially considering the costumes of the one hundred and seventeen other portraits of the queen where she is not wearing sober black.

As the second chapter explained, although sober black costume was a sign of mourning for widows, it was also a sign of social status. Bess of Hardwick donned the black costume in her portrait in order to express her grief for the death of her husband but also her new found freedom in his death.²³⁵ Though specific English court mourning practices are still relatively unknown, according to the German traveller, Lupold von Wedel, Elizabeth wore mourning in 1585: "Now came the queen, dressed in black on account of the death of the Prince of Orange and the Duke of Alansson; on each side of her curly hair she wore a large pearl of the size of a hazelnut."²³⁶

Queen Elizabeth, however, was not a widow nor was she ever married. Nevertheless, in the Siena Sieve portrait, Elizabeth is in a possible state of allegorical mourning. In the 1580's, during the time of the Siena Sieve portrait, Elizabeth and the Duc d'Alençon (the youngest son of King Henry II of France and Catherine de Medici) were openly engaged in marriage negotiations. Doris Adler has argued that the portrait was a message to the French court. In her reading, the sieve was a reference to a popular fairy tale, "The Well at the World's End," a variation on the frog prince tale. In it, a girl

²³⁴ Lawson, "Rainbow for a Reign," 37. Arnold also indicated such a point, in *Elizabeth's Wardrobe Unlock'd*, 91.

²³⁵ Wealthy English widows had considerable control over their own and inherited property. See Chapter II in this thesis.

²³⁶ Gottfried von Bulow, "Journey through England and Scotland made by Lupold von Wedel in the years 1584 and 1585," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 9 (1895), 250. Suggested by Arnold, *Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe Unlock'd*, 58.

is sent by her wicked stepmother to fetch water from the well with a sieve. At the well she meets a frog that promises to help her if she will promise to marry him. The girl agrees and the frog helps her carry water in the sieve. The story continues similarly to the traditional tale. The frog holds the girl to her promise and in the end the frog transforms into a handsome prince. Interestingly, Elizabeth's pet name for Alençon was "Frog."²³⁷ Thus the sieve becomes not only a reference to Elizabeth's chastity (by way of the Vestal Virgin, Tuccia), but also a reference to the tale of the frog prince. In this reading, Elizabeth becomes the girl who is assisted by her prince, Alençon. However, Elizabeth's fate is not to marry the frog, which, as Adler indicated, is articulated by the Dido and Aeneas imagery on the column. Here it is not Elizabeth who is represented as Aeneas but Alençon.²³⁸ Elizabeth is cast as the lonely Dido, whose partner had to leave for divine and imperial reasons. However, she still carries the sieve, which Adler agrees stands for discernment, and thus, unlike the Virgilian Dido, she still retains her judgment even though she is left by Aeneas/ Alençon. Elizabeth as Dido becomes a kind of widow. She had a man, but fate deprived her of him.²³⁹ Adler's study of the Siena Sieve portrait opened up further possible investigation of Elizabeth as a figure in mourning. Elizabeth

²³⁷ Adler, "The Riddle of the Sieve," 1-2.

²³⁸ Ibid., 8-9. Adler also connects the Herculean column (see Strong, *Gloriana*, 104-106) to the duke by way of name. The Duke's first name was Hercules. Adler, "The Riddle of the Sieve," 9.

²³⁹ However, Adler's reading of the portrait is based on Elizabeth's fondness towards Alençon as the portrait equates the French prince as a new Aeneas. Although she did not connect the portrait to any patron, her argument is based on a heavy connection with the French court. Adler argued, based on Strong's (*Gloriana*, 101) original suggestion, that this portrait was sent to the French court (and to Catherine de Medici) as a message of Elizabeth's rejection of Alençon. However, while the two courts did exchange portraits, there is no evidence that proves that the Siena Sieve portrait was sent to France and taken by Catherine de Medici to Siena. Several scholars have suggested that this portrait could be the portrait that pleased Catherine de Medici so much. In a letter from Sir Henry Cobham, the English Ambassador to France, he wrote, "The ladies marveled at the size of the pearls on her dress and noted with satisfaction that she was attired all over in the French fashion." Cobham to Walsingham, 22 January 1581/2, Public Records Office, SP 78/7, no. 12. As cited in Strong, *Gloriana*, 21.

however, is not mourning the death of Alençon, but the impossibility of their match. However, Adler does not connect Elizabeth's costume in the Siena Sieve portrait with mourning, but does use "soberly" in her brief description of Elizabeth's appearance.²⁴⁰

Deanne Williams, author of the article "Dido, Queen of England," also argued that Elizabeth takes on a widow-like persona in the Siena Sieve portrait. Williams pointed out that Dido, ancient queen of Carthage, was actually one of Elizabeth's many celebrated prototypes.²⁴¹ According to tradition, there were two Didos: the traditional, historical Dido and the fictional, Virgilian Dido. Roman historians celebrated Dido as a widowed queen who founded the empire of Carthage. This Dido (also known as Elissa – a coincidence not overlooked by Elizabethan panegyrists) killed herself to prevent a forced second marriage, thereby becoming an emblem of "conjugal chastity."²⁴² However, Virgil fictionalized the character. Dido became a queen poisoned by love, leaving her empire to decay while she doted on Aeneas. Virgil's Dido ultimately killed herself as well, not for the sake of chastity, however, but in a fit of passion over Aeneas's departure.

Elizabeth was repeatedly celebrated as a parallel to the historical Dido. Playwrights such as Christopher Marlowe used Dido to celebrate Elizabeth's correct choice: chastity over love and marriage (in connection to the Alençon match). Williams believed that the Siena Sieve portrait represented the two Didos: the fictional Dido (seen

²⁴⁰ Adler does take note of the difference in costume between the Siena Sieve and Plimpton portrait, but only notes that the difference perhaps emphasizes Elizabeth's seriousness. Adler, "The Riddle of the Sieve," 7.

²⁴¹ "Dido, Queen of England," *ELH*, 73 no. 1 (Spring, 2006): 31-59. Williams's article is one of several publications on Elizabeth as Dido.

²⁴² David Scott Wilson-Okamura, *Virgil in the Renaissance* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010): 235.

in the pillar) and the historical Dido, portrayed by Elizabeth.²⁴³ The choice of the historical Dido “complimented and reinforced Elizabeth’s refusal to wed.”²⁴⁴ Elizabeth, Williams wrote “considered herself to be, like Dido, a widow.”²⁴⁵ However, although Williams made this statement, she made no connection between this idea and Elizabeth’s costume in the Siena Sieve portrait.

Several European queen regents throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries also used sober costume to express their power. Catherine de Medici, who served as regent for her son beginning in 1559 wore the costume as an expression of her right to rule. By birth Catherine was Florentine and after the death of her husband, King Henry II of France, Catherine de Medici’s only living connection to the French throne was through her children. Catherine fashioned herself as a loyal wife, dutiful mother, and grieving widow in a successful attempt to maintain power within the French monarchy. She played upon the very characteristics of her gender that her opponents sought to use against her. Catherine’s mourning of her late husband was theatrical: as Katherine Crawford suggested, “Catherine not only fulfilled the routine expectations; she ostentatiously exceeded them.”²⁴⁶ For example, instead of wearing mourning dress for the required two year period after the death of her husband, Catherine donned the black dress for thirty years, until her own death.²⁴⁷ Furthermore, Catherine would publically burst

²⁴³ Williams, “Dido, Queen of England,” 41.

²⁴⁴ Ibid., 49.

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

²⁴⁶ Katherine Crawford, “Catherine de Medicis and the Performance of Political Motherhood,” *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 31, no. 3 (Autumn, 2000), 656.

²⁴⁷ Crawford, “Catherine de Medicis and the Performance of Political Motherhood,” 657

into tears at the mere mention of her late husband's name.²⁴⁸ Catherine was well known for her loyalty to her husband (despite his own conspicuous lack of fidelity) while he was still alive. Upon his death, Catherine became Henry's "perpetual wife," justifying her place in the French monarchy by maintaining her appearance as a "devoted widow."²⁴⁹

In a portrait after Francois Clouet, the Royal Painter of the French monarchy, Catherine appears as a widow (fig. 4.6). The bust portrait portrays Catherine in an all black gown. Her black lace widow's hood dips deeply over her forehead. The soft white of her open collar is the only different color of her costume. This image is only one of the many copies of Clouet's prototype that were widely distributed during the sixteenth century.

Catherine was consistently portrayed in sober black costume in the portraiture of her widowhood. In the celebrated Valois tapestries Catherine is the only figure portrayed all in black.²⁵⁰ Catherine is the most visible figure in the images because of her costume color. In addition to mourning, black symbolized Henry II. Catherine first used black clothing while Henry was still alive to express concern for the king during his military campaigns.²⁵¹ Furthermore, Shelia Ffolliott pointed out that Henry himself adopted the use of black after Phillip II of Spain held him hostage.²⁵² Dressed in black, Catherine

²⁴⁸ For more of Catherine's antics see Crawford, "Catherine de Medicis and the Performance of Political Motherhood," 643-673.

²⁴⁹ Ibid., 672. See also Sheila Ffolliott, "Catherine de' Medicis as Artemisia: Figuring the Powerful Widow," in *Rewriting the Renaissance: The Discourses of Sexual Difference in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Margaret W. Ferguson, et al. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 228.

²⁵⁰ Frances Yates, *The Valois Tapestries* (London: The Warburg Institute, University of London, 1959), xvii.

²⁵¹ Crawford, "Catherine de Medicis and the Performance of Political Motherhood," 655.

²⁵² Ffolliot, "Catherine de' Medicis as Artemisia," 228.

became Henry's "virtual stand-in."²⁵³ Diane de Poitiers, Catherine's rival at the French court and Henry's longtime mistress, was known for wearing black and white. Diane too was a widow but Catherine's adoption of a solely black mourning garment was probably intentional. Ffolliott suggested that "Catherine's wearing of black had blotted out Diane's noted use of black and white."²⁵⁴ "The somber, pious widow was the stuff of which women in positions of public authority were made," Crawford argued, "but even more, the sheer constancy of Catherine's image offered a type of pictorial stability in a period when any stability was hard to come by."²⁵⁵ Catherine's use of the sober costume served as visual a reminder of her devotion to her husband and therefore her devotion to France.²⁵⁶ Thus, the black sober costume signified the seat of her power and justified her rights within the monarchy.

Janet Arnold pointed out that in 1550 Diane de Poitiers warned Mary of Guise that she should not appear in mourning for her sons at the French court because, "a queen might only wear mourning for her husband without damaging her dignity."²⁵⁷ However, Mary could wear a black costume. Significantly, Rosalind Marshall, who cited Diane de Poitiers's advice in her article, did not elucidate any further on Mary's mourning wear,

²⁵³ Ffolliott, "Catherine de' Medicis as Artemisia," 229.

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

²⁵⁵ Crawford, "Catherine de Medicis and the Performance of Political Motherhood," 672.

²⁵⁶ See also Elizabeth McCartney's chapter, "Bodies Political and Social: Royal Widows in Renaissance Ceremonial," in *Women as Sites of Culture*, ed. Susan Shifrin 79-92 (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2002).

²⁵⁷ Arnold, *Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe Unlock'd*, 19 and Rosalind K. Marshall, "'Hir Rob Ryall': The Costume of Mary of Guise," *Costume* 12 no. 1 (1978), 6.

and what exactly she meant by “black clothes.”²⁵⁸ Nevertheless, Diane de Poitiers’s statement, although referring strictly to the custom of the French Court, suggests that “black clothes” could have an ambiguous meaning.

Aside from its associations with mourning as we have seen, black was also a masculine color. Black costume held particular significance for male courtiers. As discussed previously, Baldassare Castiglione’s *Book of the Courtier* argued that black was the ideal color for the courtier.²⁵⁹ Interestingly, in the Siena Sieve portrait the male figures in the arcade are dressed in colorful costumes (fig. 4.7). The two closest courtiers pose in such a way as to model both the front and back of the popular male courtier fashion. Hilliard portrayed Essex in a similar costume for his miniature *Young Man among Roses*. He is dressed in the courtly fashion of the 1580’s.²⁶⁰ Jane Ashelford argued that during Elizabeth’s reign men’s fashion became more effeminate.²⁶¹ The codpiece had all but disappeared from male fashion. The trunk hose had also shifted away from the swollen, stuffed breeches to a much smaller and shorter style.²⁶² Furthermore, men emphasized their legs by wearing colorful hose and minimal slippers. Appearing in such a way, the two courtiers in the background become subordinate to Elizabeth.

In the arcade depicted in the Siena Sieve portrait, the courtier on the right is turned towards the left, one hand on his hip, the other is holding up a pike. His doublet

²⁵⁸ “Black clothes” is used by Marshall in summing up de Poitiers’s advice. According to Marshall, de Poitiers added, “that is would be perfectly acceptable if Mary wore black clothes without any explicit evidences of mourning,” Marshall, “‘Hir Rob Ryall’,” 6.

²⁵⁹ See Chapter I of this thesis.

²⁶⁰ Roy Strong, “Faces of a Favorite,” 80-90.

²⁶¹ Ashelford, *Dress in the Age of Elizabeth I*, 43.

²⁶² *Ibid.*, 43-65.

and matching trunk hose are of a rich orange/gold material. The pinking (diagonal slashing) can be seen throughout his doublet. His cloak hangs off his right shoulder. His hose are of a bright yellow and his legs are emphasized by his contrapposto stance. He also wears a large white ruff. The man on the left wears the same costume only in red. He faces the viewer and the large peascod shape of his doublet is visible as he leans towards his companion.

The costumes of the two courtiers contrast with Elizabeth's sober costume. Their colorful style is more effeminate and Elizabeth's is more masculine if read according to Castiglione's color theory.²⁶³ The foppery of the men in the background throws Elizabeth's seriousness into a higher relief. Furthermore, Elizabeth's high-neck dress could be a symbol of modesty. Paul Hentzner, a 16th century German traveler wrote, on occasion of seeing Elizabeth at Greenwich in 1598, "Her Bosom was uncovered, as all English ladies have it, till they marry."²⁶⁴ According to Hentzner's remark, Elizabeth's covered bosom in the Siena portrait would not have emphasized her maidenhood and thus her search for a husband.²⁶⁵ Dressed in all black as she is in the Siena Sieve portrait, Elizabeth is dressed as the ideal male in the terms articulated in Castiglione's treatise.

²⁶³ As Castiglione wrote: "Yet which of us is there, that seeing a gentleman goe with a garment upon his backe quartered with sundrie colors, or with so many pointes tied together, and all about with laces and fringes set overthwart, will not count him a verie dizzard, or a common jeaster?" Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, 1588, np. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, A dizzard is defined as a foolish fellow, idiot, or blockhead.

²⁶⁴ Arnold, *Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe Unlock'd*, 11. It should be pointed out, however, that Elizabeth appears in many high-necked dresses most likely of no significance. However, the high-necked dress in the 'Siena Sieve' portrait may, as I wish to suggest, be intentional.

²⁶⁵ This is in marked contrast to Elizabeth's rather exposed chest in her portrayal as a virginal bride in the Rainbow portrait. For example see Strong, *Gloriana*.

Furthermore, Elizabeth's costume overwhelms and overshadows her colorful courtiers in the background.

The column further enhances Elizabeth's gravity, but in a different manner. The scenes on the column in the background of the Siena Sieve portrait replay passages from Book One and Book Four depicting the relationship of Aeneas and Dido. As previously argued, the Virgilian Dido was traditionally seen as a temptress, trying to lure Aeneas away from his destiny. However, Aeneas overcomes this temptation and goes on to found the Roman Empire.²⁶⁶ The English monarchy celebrated Brutus, a descendent of Aeneas, as one of its legendary founder kings.²⁶⁷ Elizabeth, by this tradition, was related to Aeneas by blood. However, Strong asserted that in this image, Elizabeth is not just related to Aeneas, she is Aeneas. In the context of the column, the sieve, and the globe, "Elizabeth" Strong argued, "is cast as this century's Aeneas. She too is of imperial descent, she too is destined to found a mighty (British) empire and in order to achieve it she too has spurned the wiles of human passion."²⁶⁸ Through juxtaposition with her mythic ancestor, Elizabeth takes on a masculine role as the new Aeneas.

Elizabeth herself often referred to herself in masculine terms in her speeches. Her most famous line, given to the troops at Tilbury as the Spanish Armada approached, evokes the duality of her position: "I know I have the body but of a weak and feeble woman, but I have the heart and stomach of a king and of a king of England too."²⁶⁹ Thus

²⁶⁶ Strong, *Gloriana*, 107.

²⁶⁷ Brutus was celebrated as Aeneas's grandson who founded an empire along the banks of the river Thames. Adler, "The Riddle of the Sieve," 8.

²⁶⁸ Strong, *Gloriana*, 107.

²⁶⁹ Queen Elizabeth's Armada Speech to the Troops at Tilbury, August 9, 1588 from BL, MS Harley 6798, art. 18, fol. 87; late sixteenth- or early seventeenth-century copy written on a single 6-by-8-inch leaf. As

Elizabeth herself emphasizes her two bodies, (outside she is female, but inside she is male) and is complicit in the crafting of a propagandistic androgyny for herself.²⁷⁰

Elizabeth's sober costume is thus a representation of both masculine and feminine characteristics. Constance Jordan, in her essay entitled "Political Androgyny: more on the Siena Sieve portrait," believed that it was vital to Elizabeth's role as a female sovereign that she act, in certain cases, like a man. England's patriarchal society allowed men (such as Henry VIII) to possess sexual power over women by sleeping with them and toying with their affections.²⁷¹ However, Jordan argued that Elizabeth created "the illusion that her princely nature also possessed the capacity to capture the objects of its desire and to leave the effects of that appropriation as vague as they would be were she a man."²⁷² Indeed, she toyed with many male relationships and possible marital matches. In other words, Elizabeth's actions towards men were like that of a conventional male's actions towards women. As Jordan argued, "her power as a fictional male is represented as including the kind of power to control and possess her suitors that is entirely at her discretion, a power that her contemporaries saw as proper to male sexuality functioning in a patriarchal culture."²⁷³ She connected the images of Aeneas and Dido, not with

cited in *Elizabeth: Collected Works*, eds. Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller, and Mary Beth Rose (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), 326.

²⁷⁰ According to Frances Teague Elizabeth was largely responsible for her own speeches Frances Teague "Queen Elizabeth in her Speeches," in *Gloriana's Face: Women, Public and Private, in the English Renaissance*, ed. S.P. Cerasano and Marion Wynne-Davies (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1992): 68.

²⁷¹ Constance Jordan, "Representing Political Androgyny: More on the Siena Portrait of Queen Elizabeth I," in *The Renaissance Englishwoman in Print: Counterbalancing the Canon*, eds. Anne M. Haselkorn and Betty S. Travitsky (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1990), 162.

²⁷² *Ibid.*, 162.

²⁷³ *Ibid.*, 168.

chastity, but with the sexual prowess of Aeneas, who has had his fill of Dido and exercises his male right to leave her.²⁷⁴ Jordan calls Elizabeth's body androgynous, as her physical female body is fused to her male political body.²⁷⁵

Grant McCracken's study of clothing colors worn by Elizabeth's male courtiers in their portraits emphasized black as a symbol of maturity and sober judgment.²⁷⁶ Youth was emphasized by lighter colors, while the more mature courtiers, who were more suited to administer the government, wore black.²⁷⁷ While the youths depicted in 'light' colored costumes stood for vitality and boldness, youth also stood for impulsiveness. Thus, as Elizabeth toyed with the younger generation who were "eager in the pursuit of sensual pleasure" in their 'light' colored clothing, asserting her masculine dominance over them, she was represented in black that represented "stability and established mind."²⁷⁸ Indeed, at the time of the commission, Elizabeth was in her fifties and Devereux, painted in a 'light' colored costume in Hilliard's miniature (c.1585-95), was just turning twenty.

The circumstances around the exact commission of the Siena Sieve portrait are still unknown. Christopher Hatton, one of Elizabeth's courtiers, is generally regarded as the patron.²⁷⁹ Specifically, Strong argued that Hatton himself is featured in the portrait.²⁸⁰ As one of the men in the arcade, Hatton is portrayed accompanied by a page and

²⁷⁴ Ibid., 169.

²⁷⁵ Ibid., 160-161.

²⁷⁶ Grant McCracken, "Dress Color at the Court of Elizabeth I," 515-533.

²⁷⁷ Ibid., 517. McCracken cited that the median age of Elizabeth's Privy Council was 51.

²⁷⁸ Ibid., 517 and 523.

²⁷⁹ See Strong, *Gloriana*, 101-105. See Walter Oakeshott and Anson Jordan for an alternative patron in "The Siena Portrait of Queen Elizabeth I," *Apollo* 124 (October 1986), 306-309.

²⁸⁰ Strong, *Gloriana*, 101-102.

approaching the queen. The hind portrayed on his hanging sleeve, which was a prominent feature of his coat of arms, identifies Hatton.²⁸¹ Hatton's inclusion in the portrait emphasizes Elizabeth's "androgynous rule by alluding to her princely license," Jordan argued, "Hatton himself...was once intimate with the queen and was then rejected by her."²⁸² Hatton was a strong opponent of Elizabeth's courtship with Alençon. By commissioning a portrait that featured the queen in a sober costume, Hatton presented an image of a sober-minded and mature monarch who did not need to marry a French prince (nor should she, considering the fate of Virgil's Dido depicted on the column).

Black was a powerful choice of costume color and its power lies in its multiple meanings, encompassing both mourning and masculinity. Although mourning has a certain deferential connotation, for many wealthy and elite women in the Elizabethan era it signified freedom. However, it also signified transition and during the 1580's the English court was in major transition. By this time Elizabeth was in her fifties and past her childbearing years. Indeed, the scholarship around the Siena Sieve portrait focuses on the shift of Elizabeth's status during the 1580's. As the marriage negotiations with

²⁸¹ Strong, *Gloriana*, 101. The hind is also featured in another portrait of Hatton around 1588-91. In 1969 Strong attributed the 'Siena Sieve' portrait to Cornelius Ketel based on the Flemish style on Hatton's patronage. First in Strong, *The English Icon*, and then further supported in Strong, *Gloriana*. However, a newer attribution, most recently by Karen Hearn has surfaced. In her catalogue of the exhibition "Dynasties," Hearn cited a fourth inscription on the canvas below the globe: '1583. Q MASSYS I ANT.' Hearn, *Dynasties*, 85. Hearn pointed out that Hatton could have encountered Metsys when he visited Antwerp in 1573. Hearn also cited an incident in 1577 where Elizabeth attempted to buy a painting by Quentin Metsys the Elder (d.1529). Little is known about Quentin Metsys the Younger, however, his family left Antwerp (including his father, Jan and uncle, Cornelius) and are recorded living in London during the 1580's. Hearn, *Dynasties*, 86. Oakeshott and Jordan argue that this figure is Phillip II, whom Elizabeth had earlier rejected as a suitable marriage partner, in "The Siena Portrait of Queen Elizabeth I," 305.

²⁸² Jordan, "Representing Political Androgyny," 171. In a 1573 letter from fellow courtier Edward Dyer, Dyer warns Hatton to watch his behavior and act carefully around the queen, "For though in the beginning, when her majesty sought you (after her good manner) she did not bear with rugged dealing of yours, until she had what she fancied, yet now, after satiety and fullness, it will rather hurt than help you." Sir Nicholas Harris, *Memoirs of the Life and Times of Sir Christopher Hatton*, K. G. (London, 1847), 17, 18. As cited in Jordan, "Representing Political Androgyny," 163.

Alençon came to an abrupt end in 1584, Elizabeth's government acknowledged that she was beyond childbearing years. The "Cult of the Marriageable Virgin" celebrated Elizabeth as a chaste maiden waiting for the appropriate husband.²⁸³ However, during the 1580's, Elizabeth's Cult of the Marriageable Virgin died and in its place arose the Cult of the Virgin Goddess. The Cult of the Virgin Goddess celebrated the unmarried queen as a goddess with parallels to Diana and Astraea. The sober costume and the color black could signify this change in state. Her costume represents both feminine and masculine traits of power. In images like the Siena Sieve portrait, Elizabeth is no longer shown as a woman ready for marriage, but as an able and powerful androgynous being who has both the qualities of a strong woman and a powerful man.

²⁸³ According to John N. King, there were various virgin cults of Elizabeth. See "Queen Elizabeth I: Representations of the Virgin Queen." *Renaissance Quarterly*, 43 no. 1 (Spring 1990): 30-74.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Women's sober black costume was a powerful statement that expressed the wearer's position and power. Its significance was not reliant upon extravagant decoration or colorful material. Instead, it was the lack of these accouterments that articulated a meaning beyond wealth or status. While previous scholarship on Elizabethan costumes is concerned with the "increased preoccupation with pattern and avoidance of plain surfaces,"²⁸⁴ this thesis instead shifts the focus and explicitly looks at women's costumes that are relatively "plain" in comparison.

As an introduction to Elizabethan women's sober costume, this thesis highlights an understudied type of costume and emphasizes how important consideration of the costume is to the reading of the portrait as a whole. While scholars have begun to explore the power of sober costume for men, none have expressly examined the use of the costume in Elizabethan portraits of women.²⁸⁵ On one hand costume history emphasizes a broad reading of fashion. While the discipline contributes valuable insight into the importance of fashion and the importance of fashion in portraits, sober costume has largely been overlooked. Art history, meanwhile has been preoccupied with the decoding of iconography and the identification of patrons and sitters in Elizabethan portraits. Costume is sometimes addressed, but usually in regard to the extraordinary object like the jewel, the symbol, or the extreme luxury textile. The interdisciplinary approach

²⁸⁴ Ashelford, *Dress in the Age of Elizabeth*, 24.

²⁸⁵ John Harvey's discussion of the power of black disregards the power of black dress for women. He neither addresses the number of portraits of women in sober dress in the 16th century, nor believes that women's black costumes connote statuses other than mourning. Harvey denies the power in mourning for women and their use of it (although mourning for men and its power plays a pivotal role in his argument). For more information see Chapter I.

undertaken by this thesis highlights the contributions of each field, combining and organizing the various readings into cohesive conclusions about sober costume.

Yet, not every woman shown in a sober costume connotes a similar message of power and control. This thesis establishes a platform that can assist further research. Patronage is crucial for portraits of Elizabethan subjects. In the strategic examples, the choice by the patron to be represented in the sober costume facilitates the reading of the costume as a purposeful instrument of self-fashioning. Furthermore, analysis of the intended audience, whether domestic or civic can also help decipher the intended visual code. As this project outlined, these factors can alter and heighten the meaning of the sober costume.

The specific case studies examined in this thesis demonstrate that the costume transcended social boundaries. Women from all classes, including Queen Elizabeth I herself, were shown in varying sorts of sober garments. The case studies also demonstrate that the meaning of women's sober costume is complicated and multifaceted. The meaning of the costume for Elizabethan women is not fixed, but remains fluid. However, an over-arching theme of power relates the costume of the three case studies. Women's sober costume draws similar and sometimes parallel connotations from men's sober costume. However, the associations that accompany Elizabethan women and their representations intensify the visual code. Ultimately, the sober women's costume is an expression of the power these women have achieved, as well as their lawful right to wield such power.

APPENDIX

FIGURES



Figure 1.1. Lucas de Heere, *Drawing of Four Citizens' Wives*, from his manuscript *Corte Beschryuninghe van Engheland, Schotland, ende Irland*, c. 1574, pen and ink with wash. British Library, London.



Figure 1.2. Isaac Oliver, *An Allegorical Scene*, c.1590-95, watercolor and gouache on vellum on card, 11.3 x 17 cm. Den Kongelige Maleri- og Skulptursamling, Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen.



Figure 2.1. Probably by Rowland Lockey, 'Elizabeth Hardwick, Dowager Countess of Shrewsbury,' after 1590, oil on panel, 102.2 x 78.1 cm. Hardwick Hall, The Devonshire Collection (The National Trust), England.



Figure 2.2. Follower of Hans Eworth, 'Elizabeth Hardwick as Lady St. Loe, later Countess of Shrewsbury,' c.1560-1569, oil on panel, 86.7 x 66.7cm. Hardwick Hall, The Devonshire Collection (The National Trust), England.

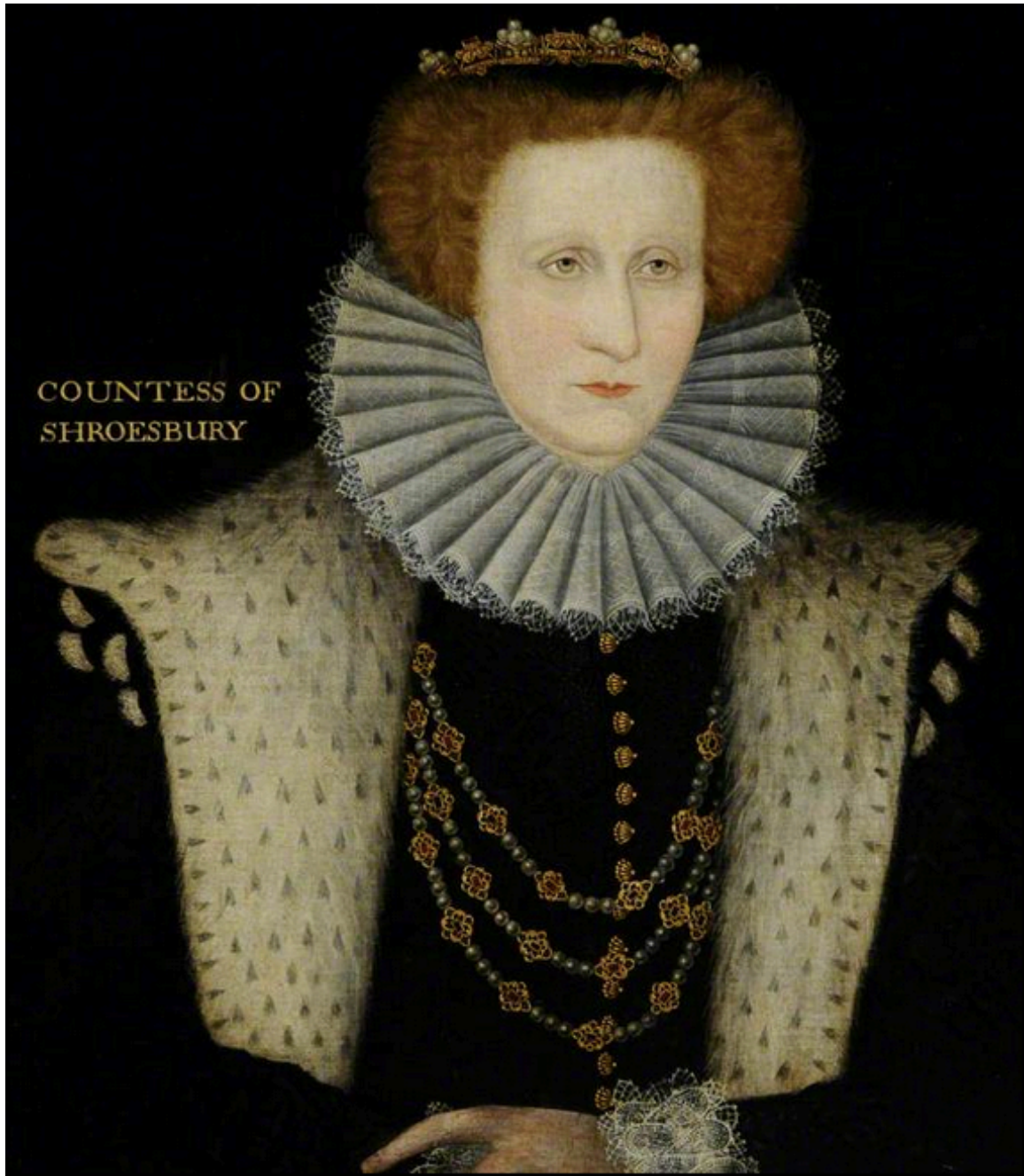


Figure 2.3. British School, 'Elizabeth Hardwick, Countess of Shrewsbury,' c.1580, oil on canvas 62 x 55 cm. Hardwick Hall, The Devonshire Collection (The National Trust), England.



Figure 2.4. Hans Eworth, 'Mary Neville, Lady Dacre,' 1558, oil on panel, 73.7 x 57.8 cm. National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.



Figure 2.5. Hans Eworth, 'Mary Neville, Lady Dacre and Gregory Fiennes, 10th Baron Dacre,' 1559, oil on panel, 50 x 71.4cm. National Portrait Gallery, London.



Figure 2.6. Attributed to Jan van Belcamp, *The Great Picture Triptych*, c.1647, oil on canvas, 254 x 254 cm (center panel) 254 x 119.38 cm (side panels). Abbot Hall Art Gallery, England.



Figure 2.7. Attributed to Jan van Belcamp, detail of *The Great Picture Triptych*, c.1647, oil on canvas, 254 x 119.38 cm. Abbot Hall Art Gallery, England.



Figure 3.1. Unknown English artist, portrait of Joyce Frankland, 1586, oil on panel. Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge.



Figure 3.2. Unknown English artist, portrait of Robert Trappes, 1554, oil on panel. Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge.



Figure 3.3. Unknown English artist, portrait of Joanna Trappes née Crispe, 1555, oil on panel. Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge.



Figure 3.4. Portrait of Dr. John Caius, c.1510-1573, oil on panel. Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge.



Figure 3.5. Unknown English artist, portrait of Margaret Craythorne, c.1580-90, oil on panel. Cutlers' Company, London.



Figure 3.6. Portrait of Maud Tesdale, 1612, oil on panel, 114.3 x 83.7 cm. Christ's Hospital of Abingdon, England.



Figure 3.7. Portrait of Mary Ramsay, c.1601, oil on canvas, 116 x 93 cm. Christ's Hospital, London.



Figure 3.8. Portrait of Joan and John Cooke, c.1597-1600, oil on panel, 81.2 x 75.6 cm. Gloucester Folk Museum.



Figure 3.9. Portrait of Isabel Wetherstone, c.1597-1627, oil on panel, 67.3 x 52.4 cm. Gloucester Folk Museum.



Figure 3.10. Portrait of Elizabeth Pope, c. 1554, oil on panel, 88.9 x 67.3 cm. Trinity College, University of Oxford.



Figure 4.1. Quentin Metsys the Younger, the 'Siena Sieve' portrait of Queen Elizabeth I, c. 1583, oil on canvas, 124.5 x 91.5 cm. Pinacoteca nazionale, Siena.



Figure 4.2. Antonis Mor, 'Mary Tudor, Queen Consort of Spain,' 1554, oil on panel, 109 x 84 cm. Museo del Prado, Madrid.



Figure 4.3. George Gower, the 'Plimpton' portrait of Queen Elizabeth I, c. 1579, oil on panel, 104.1 x 76.2 cm. Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, D.C.



Figure 4.4. John Bettes the Younger, portrait of Queen Elizabeth I, c. 1585-90, Madresfield Court, England.



Figure 4.5. Nicholas Hilliard, *Young Man among Roses*, 1585-95, 13.7 x 7 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, London.



Figure 4.6. Copy after François Clouet, portrait of Catherine de Medici, c. 1580, oil on panel, 33.7 x 25.4 cm. The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore.



Figure 4.7. Quentin Metsys the Younger, detail of the 'Siena Sieve' portrait of Queen Elizabeth I, c. 1583, oil on canvas, 124.5 x 91.5 cm. Pinacoteca nazionale, Siena.

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